

# *These Times*

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**Coming—God's Beautiful New World**









## What will God's beautiful new world be like?

Just imagine the most beautiful spot you've ever seen on earth. The pictures on the two preceding pages might help. But obviously all human attempts to portray man's future inheritance are most inadequate, for "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." (1 Corinthians 2:9.) Perhaps as close as man can come to envisioning the wonders of heaven is the following word picture by Ellen G. White:

### PORTRAIT OF PARADISE

"There the redeemed shall know, even as also they are known. The loves and sympathies which God Himself has planted in the soul shall there find truest and sweetest exercise. The pure communion with holy beings, the harmonious social life with the blessed angels and with the faithful ones of all ages, who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, the sacred ties that bind together 'the whole family in heaven and earth' (Ephesians 3:15)—these help to constitute the happiness of the redeemed.

"There, immortal minds will contemplate with never-failing delight the wonders of creative power, the mysteries of redeeming love. There will be no cruel, deceiving foe to tempt to forgetfulness of God. Every faculty will be developed, every capacity increased. The acquirement of knowledge will not weary the mind or exhaust the energies. There the grandest enterprises may be carried forward, the loftiest aspirations reached, the highest ambitions realized; and still there will arise new heights to surmount, new wonders to admire, new truths to comprehend, fresh objects to call forth the powers of mind and soul and body.

"All the treasures of the universe will be open to the study of God's redeemed. Unfettered by mortality, they wing their tireless flight to worlds afar—worlds that thrilled with sorrow at the spectacle of human woe and rang with songs of gladness at the tidings of a ransomed soul. With unutterable delight the children of earth enter into the joy and the wisdom of unfallen beings. They share the treasures of knowledge and understanding gained through ages upon ages in contemplation of God's handiwork. With undimmed vision they gaze upon the glory of creation—suns and stars and systems, all in their appointed order circling the throne of Deity. Upon all things, from the least to the greatest, the Creator's name is written, and in all are the riches of His power displayed."



# COMING: GOD'S BEAUTIFUL NEW WORLD

*Filled with violence, the earth is experiencing the birth pangs of a new age.*

HE WAS only forty-two years old," commented the early-morning newscaster in a faltering voice. Instantly I knew that a young U.S. Senator and presidential aspirant had lost his fight for life. Father of ten children with another on the way, Robert Kennedy was gunned down in an attack that injured five others.

A few weeks before, world-renowned civil rights leader and Nobel Peace Prize winner Martin Luther King, Jr., had met a similar fate, leaving four children fatherless.

Four and a half years earlier the President of the United States had been killed by an assassin, who himself was slain two days later.

As I reviewed these momentous events, I recalled this graphic description of Noah's day: "The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence." Genesis 6:11.

The news media have been full of such headlines as "Violence Hits Schools and Colleges—Rebellion Spreads to High Schools." In more and more cities teachers and pupils alike are victims of terrorist violence—beatings, slashings, and gang attacks. Efforts of school authorities to cope with the problem of student anarchy often are blocked by parents who not only condone but support their children's defiance.

One Chicago principal of a Southside school testified before a city council committee: "December 6, 1967, is a day I'll never forget. At 11:25 A.M., two boys took out a sawed-off shotgun from a briefcase. They began firing away on the playground. You would have thought you were in Vietnam, with youngsters diving for cover. I have police in the building, and they responded immediately. They came out firing. It was only by the grace of God that no one was hurt."

## Campus Revolt

Recently rebelling students have rocked campus after campus in such great centers of higher education as Columbia, Northwestern, Stanford, and in smaller institutions across North America. At New York's Columbia University the faculty last spring canceled formal classes for the rest of the semester, omitting even final examinations. Weeks later commencement exercises were interrupted by student demonstrations.

Violence hit France with a vengeance at the same time that world attention was focused on Paris as a city of peace, where arbitration was being carried on to end the Vietnam fighting. Students were called "the enraged ones" by French newspapers. Symphathy riots broke out in a dozen university cities. Strikes continued for weeks, creating a national crisis.

Rioting and serious disturbances have also taken place in Germany, Britain, Spain, and other countries of Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. Many countries of Africa have suffered the devastating effects of violence.

What does all this mean?

As the Lord intervened and ended the civilization of Noah's day, so He will intervene again and end our own.

Driving down one of the streets of Washington, D.C., last summer, I suddenly found myself staring at the incredible results of rioting and looting which erupted there in early April. At first my mind refused to accept the fact that this shocking destruction leveling many city blocks had been deliberate.

Those riots left eleven persons dead and 1,200 injured! Arson and looting caused more than \$19 million in insured losses alone, with riot-connected costs for the District of Columbia government



H. A. Roberts





estimated at \$6.2 million. The riots were brought under control with the aid of 15,000 troops.

As chairman of the appropriations subcommittee for the District of Columbia, Senator Robert C. Byrd in a speech before the Senate asserted that in Washington "women cower in fear behind locked doors." And people "are afraid to venture out in the streets at night."

And this is the story in only one city. Riots in the streets occurred in more than one hundred American cities last spring.

Can anyone seriously suggest that this is nothing new? or that we have always had conditions like this?

Since 1960, crime in the United States has increased 88 percent, while the nation's population has increased only 10 percent. And even worse, if the present rate of new crime continues, the number of rapes, robberies, assaults, and thefts in the United States today will double by the end of 1972!

A recent survey in high-crime areas of two large cities showed that 43 percent of those interviewed stayed off the streets at night, 35 percent did not speak to strangers, 21 percent used only cabs and cars at night, and 20 percent wanted to move to another neighborhood—all because of lawlessness.

Though poverty is often blamed for this explosion of crime, in recent years America has grown wealthier and has distributed its means to all of its people more widely than any other country on earth. But crime has increased three times faster than the gross national product. Furthermore, juvenile crime and drug abuse by teen-agers are to be found even in the affluent suburbs of today's populous cities.

The U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee, which recently approved an anticrime bill, reported, "Crime is the most critical and urgent domestic problem facing the nation."

Who can view situations such as these without alarm? And what student of the Bible can view them without remembering the fateful days of Noah?

### Example of Parents

For almost half a century now I have attended the Seventh-day Adventist Church and have been exposed to its teachings. But important though this has been, the main religious influence on my life has not been church services but my parents' consistent, dedicated lives. The fact that their sons are both in the ministry is perhaps the highest tribute to the attractiveness of their convictions.

One thing my parents believed with all their hearts: Soon Jesus, keeping a centuries-old divine promise, will return to earth. And they taught me to believe this also. As I grew older and listened to sermons at church, camp meetings, and occasional evangelistic services, I developed for myself the firm conviction that someday soon our Lord will return. I even felt concerned that He might come before I had a chance to complete my education and enter His service as a minister.

You see, it was evident back there—forty years ago—that the signs were taking place that Jesus had given in His Word to signal the approach of His advent. He must indeed come *soon*.

Now I have been in the ministry more than twenty-five years, and my son looks forward to a place of service in God's cause. How do I feel now? With the passing of time have I concluded that "my lord delayeth his coming"? (Matthew 24:48.) Have I given up my faith and gone out to live a life full of worldly satisfactions but empty of that which really counts? No, I could not do that, because I believe more than ever that He is coming back to earth, and *soon*.

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### **An Approaching Storm**

Recently I observed the distant sky become ominously dark. Shortly the sun was obscured and the wind began to blow in great gusts. Like everyone else, I recognized signs of an approaching storm and closed the windows in my auto and home. I brought inside lawn furniture that could be damaged. In a short time when the rains came, I was indoors and safe.

Conditions in the world indicate that another and far more serious storm is approaching; every sign indicates that what we have preached for years is about to happen. To us it means "Jesus soon will come."

How are you preparing for this event? Gathering in the children, shutting doors and windows? Or, incredibly, making no preparation, are you saying, "Everything is as it always has been. There is no change. Why is anyone concerned?"

My confidence in Jesus' *soon* coming is high.

Could anyone be reading these words who once "waited for redemption" but in the passing of time lost sight of the goal? "But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; . . . the lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Matthew 24:48-51.

The Lord will come at a time when many a man "looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of."

"Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." Verse 44.

"Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing." Verse 46. If you are not ready for Jesus to come, *get ready and keep ready.*

### **Eventual Arrival**

By river steamer and jeep we had covered many miles in the hinterland of Brazil. On a certain day we were to be back at a remote town where a hired airplane was to rendezvous with us to carry us back to civilization. On the appointed day we were there, but the plane was not. All day we waited expectantly, but no engine drone greeted us from the skies.

Night fell, and we waited indoors. Since we had to be ready to go on an instant's notice, our bags were packed and we were dressed for the journey. Finally at about midnight the kindly missionary suggested that I lie down and rest while he and others kept watch. Fully clothed, I did so, and fell asleep almost instantly.

With the coming of morning we received a call from the lone telephone in the village that could make contact with the outside world. It revealed that we had not been forgotten but that bad weather had forced the pilot to delay his departure. As soon as he could, he would come for us as he had planned.

Most of the second day passed before we heard the welcome sound of a little engine in the skies. With delight we rushed to the airport and met the pilot who had come for us. Soon we were on our way toward civilization and home.

Soon Jesus, our heavenly Pilot, will come for us. It cannot be long; we must be ready. "Cast not away therefore your confidence." Hebrews 10:35. Wait patiently, fully prepared to go with Him at a moment's notice. "Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come." Matthew 24:42.

"And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh." Luke 21:28.

END

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# HELLFIRE

## Will God Skip It?

By Richard W. Coffen



How can there possibly be a hell?  
How can a loving God consign sinners to  
hellfire? There is a satisfactory answer.

**H**OW CAN there possibly be a hell? How can a loving God cast sinners into hellfire?" At this inquiry every eye in the small but crowded room turned my direction. This was not the cleverly set theological trap of a religious debater but the earnest request of an informal group of aspiring Bible students. I noticed no glib smile of craftiness accompanying the question but rather the questioning look of eager expectation for an intellectually and emotionally satisfying answer.

Perhaps you have pondered the same questions yourself: How can there possibly be a hell? How can a loving God consign sinners to hellfire? Have you found a satisfactory answer?

Has it occurred to you that these questions miss the point, and that the first question should more properly be, How can there possibly *not* be a hell?

We feel deeply that wrong should meet with retribution. We seek avengement on the assassin of Senator Robert F. Kennedy, whether we be Democrat, Republican, or Independent. We value mankind's universal sense of justice as a *virtue*, yet can we deem outraged justice on *our* part a *virtue* and on *God's* part a *defect*? Should evil rankle a pure being any less than a corrupt one? How could a pure God, a holy God, ever sit idly by twiddling His thumbs in the face of the blatant wrongs that stalk our wretched

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planet? Yes, how can there possibly *not* be a hell of some sort?

Our second question, thus, should be, How will a loving God carry out the painful task of justice?

Take a Supreme Being (Sovereign God, if you prefer) and mix well with high-handed rebels, and hell is as inevitable as is fire from a spark and gasoline. Hence, while a holy God *must* wreak vengeance on evil, the real issue is, What alternative will He take as *both* a holy *and* a loving God? A hell of some sort is inevitable. What *kind* of hell a loving God will choose is the chief question.

Essentially there are only two possible types of hell—one that would cause God *little* personal suffering, or one that would cause Him *much* suffering Himself but *less* suffering for His creatures. Further, these two basic kinds of hell could come about in several ways.

Consider the kind of hell involving little suffering on God's part. Here God faces two alternatives: either He can wipe out all rebels immediately, or else He can take all to heaven—good and bad alike. Neither of these alternatives would require much sacrifice on God's part. Let us briefly examine each alternative.

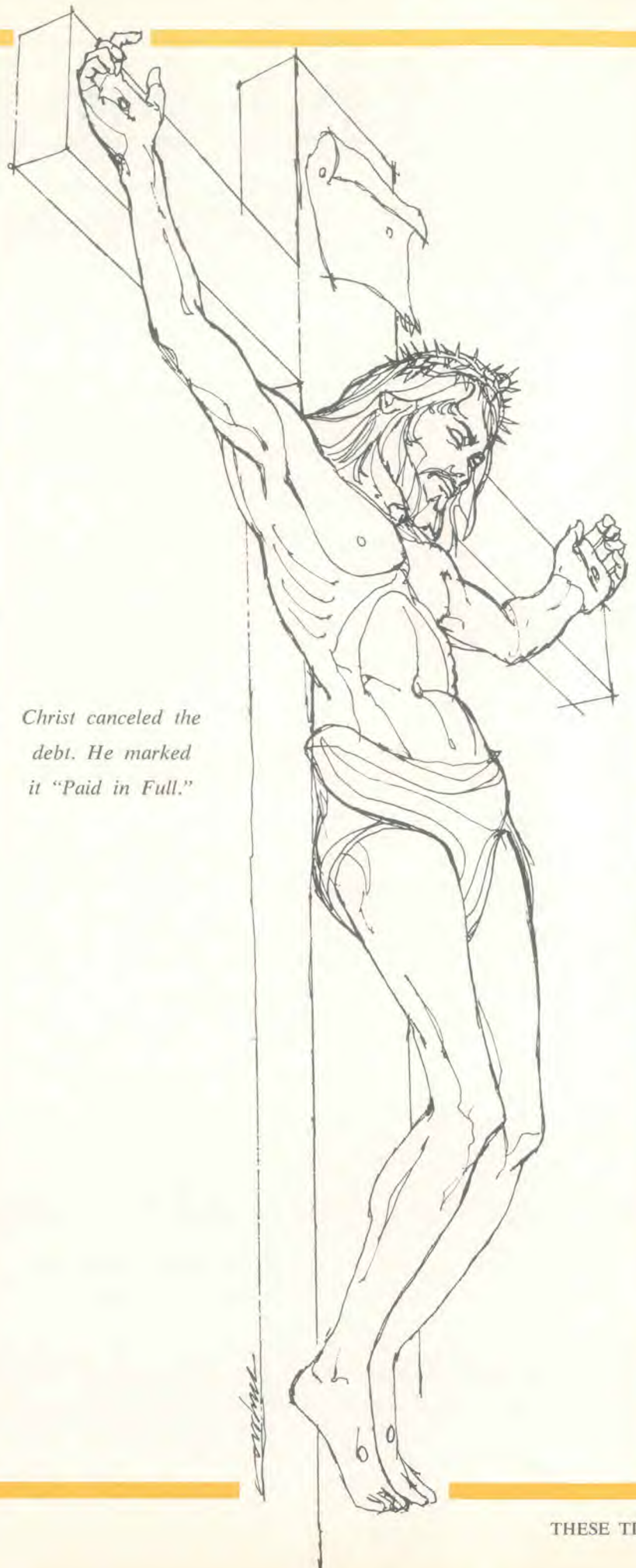
#### IMMEDIATE ANNIHILATION

As soon as sin clenched its dirty talons into God's universe, He could have obliterated every rebel. When sin slipped unobtrusively into our world, God could have blown this little speck of cosmic dust into shattered atoms, and the hole left in the universe would have been infinitesimal!

God could have had a hell at the very inception of man's selfishness. The universe could have been blotted clean before the murky ink of evil could really foul the fabric of a perfect cosmos. But what would have been gained? Nothing! Nothing but one hundred million galaxies inhabited by cowering little violets who kowtowed to God because they feared His ire.

An immediate hell could have produced nothing constructive—only timorous little beasts who, out of abject terror, whispered, "Yes, indeedy," every time God twitched an eyelid. Fearful, anxiety-ridden slaves are of no benefit, for fear and anxiety are destructive.

God desires *loving* children, not anxiety-ridden little "yes-men." Con-



*Christ canceled the  
debt. He marked  
it "Paid in Full."*



sider the child who, fearing mother's reprisals at his feelings of animosity toward baby sister, submits to mother's domineering will by asserting his great fondness for baby sister. Mother concludes that the child is good, but he is not; he is a liar. His "goodness" is merely the result of fear. It does not spring from loving desire.

God is too wise to be satisfied with anything less than love as the motivation for goodness, and "there is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love." (1 John 4:18.)

No, a hell of immediate annihilation, while it would have exempted God from suffering in Christ, would not have produced any positive benefit of lasting value.

#### UNIVERSALISM

Without causing much suffering to Himself, God could, conceivably, take all to heaven—good and bad alike. Perhaps God could have declared about sin, "Skip it! I'll take all the little dears to Paradise."

This doesn't sound like "hell" to you? Perhaps you have misjudged. Let us assume that God will admit to His abode even those who are in open rebellion against Him. Can you imagine the abject horror of continually—*forever*—living in the presence of Him whom you loathe, hate, despise? Can you imagine being forced to live for eternity in the same home with your worst enemy? Can you imagine the "joys" of constantly being surrounded by those you absolutely detest? What ulcers, paranoia, psychological aberrations, and warped personalities would result from such a way of life! What a hell heaven would be! And as their evil natures, sour dispositions, and selfishness would grow throughout all eternity, all hell would break loose.

Ah, but you suggest God could eliminate the problem by setting aside a portion of heaven for rebels only. That would be fine except for two reasons. First, ghettos just don't work—experience should have taught us that by now. Can't you see it—a section of Paradise filled with degeneracy, disease, death, deceit, hate, lust, thievery, stealth, war—malignancy in its myriad forms? Further, can't you envision the devil himself approaching the Supreme Court of the Universe for equal rights?

Then, too, a hellish ghetto in heaven would not work because of the size of

ghetto needed. One of Jesus' contemporaries asked, "Lord, are there few that be saved?"

Jesus replied, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many . . . will seek to enter in, and shall *not* be able." Luke 13:23, 24. "Wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and *few* there be that find it." Matthew 7:13, 14. We actually would have a ghetto of the righteous amid a teeming mass of eternally confirmed rebels, and the meek have never been safe in the midst of rebels. The sure result would be the extinction of the righteous at the hand of the wicked.

These two possible kinds of hell involving little suffering on God's part are not feasible. Then why doesn't God *do* something about sin?

*He has!* "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Romans 5:8.

"To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." 2 Corinthians 5:19, 21.

"Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." 1 John 4:10.

"And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, . . . My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Matthew 27:46.

Yes, God *has done* something about sin. He Himself bore the penalty for His high-handed rebels, hoping that His sacrifice might at least soften *some* calloused hearts, and that at least a *few* might, like the prodigal son, return home to Father—or rather to "Abba"—"Daddy." God could not say, "Skip it." Justice had to be met. Immutable rules of right and wrong had to be vindicated. The punishment had to be dealt. But God not only dealt it—*He bore it*.

See Him there on that rough-hewn cross! Slowly the vultures circle ominously overhead while God Incarnate agonizes under the sweltering Palestinian sun. He supports Himself on the cross by pressing on His spiked feet and on the small pedestal to which they are nailed. The pain is intense, but at least He can breathe. However,

soon the taut muscles of those straining legs begin to knot and cramp. He can bear the strain no longer and slumps on the cross. The nails bite deeply into His wrists as He hangs supported by them and by a narrow stick stuck uncomfortably between His crotch and into the upright of the cross.

Breathing becomes labored in this new position, and finally His stomach muscles and diaphragm cramp. His throat burns and His lungs scream for a breath of air. Painfully, slowly, He presses on those swollen feet. Slowly and painfully He raises His body on the cross. Once again He can draw fresh air into His lungs, but all too quickly the leg muscles cramp and go into spasm again. Once again He releases the pressure on His feet. The spikes tug at His wrists; the jagged wooden support bites into His crotch. The vicious cycle is continued. Up and down. Up and down. Up and down on that rugged cross He goes—filling His spine with slivers and rubbing the skin on His back raw. For six hours that torturous ritual continues. Up and down. Up and down. Leg cramps—burning lungs. Leg cramps—stomach cramps. Leg cramps—gasping throat. Leg cramps—heaving lungs. Up and down! Up and down!

Yes, God not only dealt the punishment, He bore it. And today He offers the canceled debt to you. It is marked, "Paid in Full." However, He will not force it on you despite all His personal agonies.

I sat in the home of an aging man. He had once been a faithful Christian, but because of a misunderstanding with a relative in the same church, he forsook both the church and Christianity. It had happened many years before, and now I had asked him if he would return to Christ and the church. "No," he replied, "I cannot. I would have to apologize, and I will *not*. I know I am wrong. I know I am lost. I shall just have to take God's punishment like a man. It is my due."

You, too, are free to say the same thing. You can reject God's gracious offer by saying, "Thanks, God, but I'll pay it myself—like a man." And you will pay it yourself. How "manly" you will be only time will tell!

So, then, we come to a hell overshadowed by a cross on an ancient hill called "Calvary"—a hell that must exist because "many" are those who refuse God's payment of the penalty for

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sin in their behalf. What can God do and remain righteous but let them pay it themselves?

We also must consider those subspecies of a hell involving much suffering on God's part, but the least amount of suffering possible for His creatures, and we find God confronted with three alternatives.

#### AN EVERLASTING HELL

An everlasting hell forms the common misconception of what hell is like. God, we are told, consigns sinners to a sulfurous inferno that never cools! The rejecters of God's mercy writhe in anguish for eternity—their blood boiling in its veins and their brains seething in their skulls. Ever dying, never dead, these unfortunates—regardless of the extent of their crime, be they indifferent Don Juans or treacherous Eichmanns—suffer identical agonies of body, soul, and mind throughout the endless ages of eternity. And all the while the burning flames are tended by the devil himself—a red-skinned, cloven-footed, spiked-tailed, sharp-horned little demon who has never agreed with God but who has the task of supervising God's just punishment of sin!

It is a nice idea—this everlasting hell—for the devil's purposes, that is! How delighted the archfiend must be when thinking men and women completely write God out of the picture because of a misconceived hell! Those who possess a keen sense of justice cannot help but see the affront to righteousness such a hell really is—all evil-doers, irrespective of their misdemeanors, sent to the same eternal punishing. It is a miscarriage of justice, an outrage to holiness! If this be the hell God elects, no wonder so many sensitive consciences have repudiated Him!

Besides, this brand of hell destroys no sin. Instead it perpetuates it forever in the hatreds, passions, and curses of the writhing forms of shrieking men and women. Can you imagine God perpetuating sin forever? The New Testament talks about *perishing* and *destruction*—not perpetuation.

Furthermore, this kind of hell is based on the assumption that all men—saints and sinners alike—possess eternal life—the ability to live forever. The chief difference is merely *where* we shall spend that life—forever in hell or forever in heaven. On the other hand, Jesus Christ emphatically declared that eternal life is a unique gift

for Christians only. "That whosoever *believeth in him* should *not perish*, but *have eternal life*." John 3:15. "He that *believeth on the Son hath everlasting life*: and he that *believeth not the Son shall not see life*." Verse 36.

Jesus' chief task was to give us this life. "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it in superabundance." John 10:10, Greek. Christ "*hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel*." 2 Timothy 1:10.

"He that *hath the Son hath life*; and he that *hath not the Son of God hath not life*." 1 John 5:12.

How unfortunate that we sometimes differ with Christ regarding this important subject! How unfortunate that we frequently fail to realize the uniqueness, hence great value, of eternal life—God's gift through Christ for Christians only! The lost *perish* (Luke 13:3, 5; John 3:15, 16; Romans 2:12; 1 Corinthians 1:18; 2 Corinthians 2:15; 2 Thessalonians 2:10; 2 Peter 3:9) and go to *destruction* (Matthew 7:13; Romans 9:22; Philippians 3:19; 2 Peter 2:1, 2; 2 Thessalonians 1:9; 1 Timothy 6:9).

#### REWARD THE RIGHTEOUS; LEAVE THE WICKED TO THEIR OWN DEVISINGS

This kind of hell could be labeled the "merciful" hell. God destroys no one. He merely lets sin and sinners go on indefinitely while He sits by with no intention of interfering.

It is like the cage of monkeys I saw at a zoo. The cage contained one large monkey and several small ones. For some reason the larger monkey was angered at the little ones, and all bedlam broke loose. With fierce looks and agile maneuverings the larger monkey grabbed a small monkey and bit him ferociously. Squealing with pain, the little monkey ran to a corner and cowered there—whimpering for several minutes. All the while the larger monkey bullied the others until they were all cowering in corners and hiding behind each other, stricken with terror.

The zoo keeper was nowhere around. He had put the whole lot of monkeys together and could hardly have cared less about the outcome. Is this what God should do? What a world!—marked by hate, hysteria, and helplessness, by sickness, suffering, and starvation, by war, waste, and wantonness, by lasciviousness, lechery, and lassitude! What a hell it would be! How cruel can we get?

Can you imagine a father warning his child to stay away from the boiling blue waters of Morning Glory Pool in Yellowstone National Park, but refusing to rescue the disobedient child from the scalding waters when he fell in, merely standing by while the rebellious lad simmered like a lobster? Likewise, although our heavenly Father must punish rebellion, can He be so cruel as to let us simmer endlessly in our own little caldron of war, famine, murder, and pestilence?

#### A SHORT, QUICK, COMPLETE PUNISHMENT

This subspecies of hell is a hell in which the punishment is commensurate with the crime. Justice is satisfied, but not hate. Righteousness is fulfilled, but not sadism. It is quick and complete. It is the hell the Bible calls the "lake of fire," or "Gehenna," and is described as God's "strange work." (Isaiah 28:21.)

It is the hell a loving God has tried to avoid through Jesus Christ, but "men loved darkness rather than light." (John 3:19.) Given a holy and just God, who is also love, this latter hell is inevitable—even for God. It is the most merciful yet just way of punishing sinners and eradicating sin an all-wise God could conceive. He has tried to keep the fires from igniting. He has suffered intensest agony Himself to squelch its flames. He has organized all heaven to keep it empty. But the majority of mankind has refused His gracious offer.

The fire must fall! It is called "eternal fire" because its source is the Eternal God, the "everlasting burnings." (Isaiah 33:14.) It is called "unquenchable fire" because no man can extinguish it. (Matthew 3:12.) It will devour (Revelation 20:9) like "stubble" (Nahum 1:10) the wicked, and no one will be left (Malachi 4:1). Words like *eternal* and *forever* describe the punishment because it is everlasting in its results. It is termed "perishing" and "destruction."

The fire will fall—it is inevitable. The universe will be clean once again. Rebellion will be cleared away along with the smoke.

"In view of the fact that all of these things are to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be? Surely men of good and holy character." 2 Peter 3:11, Phillips.\*

END

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# The Great Invitation

ISAIAH 55

Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.

Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.

Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.

Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people.

Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not, and nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee because of the Lord thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for he hath glorified thee.

Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near:

Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he

will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord.

For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater:

So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.

Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.



# Make Sure You're a Part of God's New World

By H. M. S. Richards



## What Jesus Really Said About Salvation

A GENTLEMAN started across a busy street one day in one of our cities, when a woman suddenly pulled him by the arm and said, "Look at that red light!"

He replied, "But look at the people going across the street."

The woman said, "Don't look at the people; look at the light and follow it!" That was good advice. It really put the whole thing in a nutshell.

Are we taking our walking signals in this world from Christ or from the crowd? Are we breaking His rules, His laws, in order to keep step with the multitude? Let us look to the Light for illumination, for instruction. What did Jesus say? Really, what did He say about salvation? We read His words in

Luke 19:9, 10: "This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

Our Saviour says two things here: First, something is lost. Second, He came to save it. We might add that wherever He comes, salvation comes, for He is salvation. He wrought it out. He brings it. According to much of our modern philosophy, however, nothing ever was lost. If there was a fall in the beginning, it was a fall upward. But if there were no fall, no loss, certainly we would not need to be saved from that loss. Then there would be no need of a Saviour, and Christ's whole mission would be superfluous. But down deep

in every human heart is the consciousness that there has been a loss. When men look at themselves long enough and carefully enough, they realize that they are lost and need to be found.

So here we have the plain, positive statement from our Lord that He Himself is the Saviour, that He brings salvation and saves that which is lost. That was the purpose of His advent to this earth.

There is something wrong with this world of ours and with this race of ours. Men call it by various names, but the Holy Scriptures call it sin. It is a disease of the mind and of the heart, and only the power of God can deliver a man from it. This Jesus came to do. He came "to seek and to save that



which was lost." (Luke 19:10.) That's why He is called Jesus. The angel who announced His birth said, "Thou shalt call his name *Jesus*: for he shall save his people from their sins." Matthew 1:21. The name *Jesus* actually means "Saviour." That He is: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16.

The Apostle Paul, in his midnight witness to the jailer of Philippi, echoed these words of his Saviour when he declared, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Acts 16:31. Notice, he did not say *feel* saved, but *be* saved.

Martin Luther, who had been trying to find peace of heart by various works and penances, discovered the truth of salvation when he read, "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified" (Romans 3:20), and "What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh" (Romans 8:3). The light began to break. But still he did not find it fully.

In the great city of Rome he looked for humility and simple piety, but he found instead ambition, political intrigue, and worldliness. Determined on penance, he climbed Pilate's Staircase on his knees; but in all his works he did not find salvation from sin or the soul peace which he desired. At last the words of Scripture came to him, "The just shall live by faith." Romans 1:17. Then the light flooded in, and he could stand erect, a believer in Christ as his only Saviour from sin. Luther accepted Christ's righteousness as his own. He had seen that Jesus, the sinless Son of God, was treated as we deserve that we might be treated as He deserved. He "died for our sins according to the scriptures." (1 Corinthians 15:3.) He took our place before the broken law, for "sin is the transgression of the law." (1 John 3:4.) God so loved the world that He gave salvation as His free gift.

A teacher in Glasgow was trying to explain the first verse of Isaiah 55 to a class of boys and girls. "Ho, every one that thirsteth," he read, "'come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.'" The beautiful invitation of this verse seemed so difficult to explain to the little people that the teacher silently prayed for light upon the sub-

ject. Then the words of Scripture came to him, "A little child shall lead them." Isaiah 11:6. Believing that God meant that one of the children could explain Isaiah's text better than he could, he asked them to listen as he read the text slowly again, and then to tell what they thought the prophet meant by inviting people to buy without money.

After the rereading of the verse, a little six-year-old girl promptly answered, "Please, sir; have it charged!"

Isn't that the real meaning of it? Our sins are charged to Jesus.

"Jesus paid it all,

All to Him I owe;

Sin had left a crimson stain;

He washed it white as snow."

—Mrs. Elvina M. Hall.

Abraham of old "believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." (Romans 4:3.) So we, too, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour, and His righteousness is accounted to us. The Apostle Paul declares that "by the righteousness of one [Jesus] the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." (Romans 5:18.) This "free gift" is "the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ." (Verse 15.)

This salvation, which Jesus brings, not only applies to forgiveness for sins of the past but also gives us grace and power to live for Him today. It is not only *justifying* grace, but *sanctifying* grace. True conversion will show itself in the life lived before others. It means regeneration, a new creation. True faith in Jesus as our Redeemer is a faith which works by love (Galatians 5:6) and reveals itself in the fruitage of good works.

One day the snow lay white over the earth, hiding every scar and sign of death. "It's a symbol of purity," said the man as he looked out of the window. And he prayed, "O Lord, as Thou hast covered the earth with whiteness, cover my soul with purity."

The sun came up the next day and melted all the snow. The brown bareness of the dead earth, with all its waste and defilement, showed again. So he who had prayed to be covered with purity amended his prayer. Now his petition was: "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." Psalm 51:10.

Purity is not a covering. It is a new life within, and salvation includes that. What we really need is a radical

change, a new birth, creative power to make us new again. A prominent man who interviewed Jesus was told, "Except a man be born again [or born "from above," as the margin puts it], he cannot see the kingdom of God." John 3:3.

This new birth, this birth from above, is a birth of water and of the Spirit; and Jesus made it emphatic, "Ye *must* be born again." Verse 7. "How will this happen? How *can* it happen?" asked the learned man. And so we all ask. The answer is found in Jesus' own words immediately following His statement that man must be born again. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." John 3:14, 15.

This new birth, then, comes through faith. We believe that Jesus will do what He says. We believe that He is the Saviour. As we see Him uplifted upon the cross, taking our place, we believe that He is the divine Son of God. As we accept Him by faith as our Saviour, we have eternal life. What a wonderful promise this is!

It is a heart-searching experience for any preacher of Jesus Christ to visit the tomb of Dwight L. Moody. Think of the mighty work that humble, earnest man of faith and consecration did in a few years of life. Think of his implicit trust in God as he taught the simple gospel of faith, the gospel which Jesus proclaimed.

Moody once said that God put the offer of salvation in so simple a way that the whole world could grasp it. Everyone can believe. A cripple might not be able to visit the sick or run errands of mercy, but he can believe. A man who cannot see might be unable to read the Bible and do many other things, but he can believe. A deaf man cannot hear, but he can believe. Even a dying man can believe. Salvation has been placed within the reach of all— young and old, foolish and brilliant, rich and poor, high and low. All may have it freely if they truly believe.

It was because of this that Jesus said, "He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." John 3:18. And at another time He said with positive words, "He that believeth . . . shall be saved." Mark 16:16.

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Someone may ask, "Did He really take our place in order to ransom us from our sins, from our own evil life?" Here are His words in Matthew 20:28, in which He makes it stronger still. He says, "Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."

That's plain and clear, isn't it? He came with one great purpose: "to give his life a ransom for many." Remember, a ransom is a price paid to redeem a captive or a slave. Christ came, then, to pay the price demanded for our sin. The Scripture plainly says that "the wages of sin is death." (Romans 6:23.) That's why He had to die for us, to take our place before the broken law.

We who are captives through our own willfulness and disobedience, captives of sin, are bought back, ransomed, delivered, saved, by the blood of the cross.

"Christ died for our sins." That is the foundation stone of our salvation. Everything rests upon that fact. The Apostle Paul, who received true understanding of salvation by direct revelation from Christ Himself, said this very thing. Listen to his words in 1 Corinthians 15:3, 4: "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures."

Our Saviour said much about salvation. Of Himself He said, "The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." John 10:11. As He hung upon the cross, someone said, "He saved others; himself he cannot save." Matthew 27:42. And that was true. He could not save us without suffering; He could not save us without death. He voluntarily took our place. "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Romans 5:8. As the theologians put it, His death was penal, substitutionary, redemptive, propitiatory, reconciliatory, efficacious, vicarious, and atoning; for "as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many." (Hebrews 9:27, 28.)

Not the least of Christ's statements is found in Mark 16:15, 16: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he

that believeth not shall be damned." Notice, here is a direct command to God's people. They are to go—to go everywhere, preaching and proclaiming the gospel, the good news. What is that good news? The good news that God gave His Son to die for men that all might be saved in Him. And that really is good news. But do we believe it? That is the question.

We repeat Christ's words, "He that believeth and is baptized [manifests his faith by baptism, which pictures the death and resurrection of his Saviour, and his death to the old life and resurrection to the new] shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned [or condemned]." These are straight, clear words. Do we believe? Have we acted on that belief and obeyed the gospel?

Baptism is one step in obedience, as we read in the words of our Saviour: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Matthew 28:19, 20. Notice: Teaching goes first, then belief. Those who are taught and who believe as a result of the teaching are baptized. Then, after baptism, teaching is to continue; and obedience of all the things commanded by Christ will have a part in the life.

As one looks upon the holy Saviour dying for the sins of men, he is led not only into faith and obedience but also into repentance. Jesus said, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." Luke 13:3. True repentance involves a sense of sin, sorrow for sin, and separation from sin by the grace and power of God. A false repentance may cause one to be sorry for the effect of his sin. That was the repentance of Judas. He repented and went and hanged himself through remorse. But the Apostle Peter, probably equally guilty—for he had denied his Lord—repented, wept bitterly, and went to Pentecost. He did a mighty work for God and finally died as a martyr for Him. Peter's was true repentance.

Real repentance as taught by Jesus is a right-about-face. It is turning around, turning away from evil, turning toward good. It is turning from man and turning toward God. If one does not turn away from sin and turn toward God, he will not find mercy. This turning about is spoken of in the Bible

as a change of mind. A man may have little or much feeling as he does it, but the experience itself is not dependent upon feeling.

You will remember the parable of Jesus in Matthew 21—the parable of the man who had two sons. To the first he said, "Go work to day in my vineyard." The boy replied, "I will not." Then the father turned to his other boy and spoke the same words. He answered, "I go, sir"—but he did not. However, his first son thought it over and changed his mind. He was not only convinced that he was wrong, but he did something about it. He went off into the field, hoeing or mowing or whatever it was that needed to be done. This is Jesus' own illustration of repentance.

When a man says, "By the grace of God I will change my ways; I will cease doing wrong; I will do right," that's repentance—a turning about. As Moody reminds us, A man is born with his face turned away from God; but when he truly repents, he is turned right around toward God.

Two brothers were convicted of stealing sheep in the old days in England. In accordance with the brutal punishment of those times, they were branded in the forehead with the letters ST—Sheep Thief. One brother, unable to bear the stigma, fled to a foreign country where he tried to hide himself. He wandered from land to land and at last died full of bitterness, and was buried in a forgotten grave. The other brother repented of his misdeed and did not try to run away from home. He said, "I can't get away from the fact that I once stole sheep, but I will remain here until I win back the respect of my neighbors and my own self-respect."

The years passed, and he gradually established a reputation for respectability and integrity, honesty and worth. At last a stranger in town saw an old man hobbling along with the letters ST branded on his forehead and asked a native what they signified. After thinking for a while, the villager said, "It all happened a long time ago, and I have forgotten the particulars. But I think the letters are an abbreviation for Saint."

There it is—the wonderful grace of God in the penitent, believing heart can change and transform the character and turn the very scars of sin into a badge of honor and beauty. We, too, may be Christ's witnesses today. END



# Becoming Untwisted



"Except ye repent,  
ye shall all likewise  
perish." Luke 13:3.

By Robert H. Pierson

youth replied, "some it strikes, and some it doesn't. I've seen many repent and take their stand for Christ, but it has never struck me."

This young man had the mistaken idea that repentance is something which strikes like lightning. Such is not true. We may be moved to repentance, but repentance is not emotion. It is a deep conviction of wrongdoing that leads the individual to turn to God for cleansing from evil.

Repentance and contrition are very closely related. Webster's dictionary defines contrition as "deep sorrow for sin, growing out of love toward God." This was also David's conception of repentance, for he declared, "I will be sorry for my sin." Psalm 38:18.

The Spirit of God points out sin. He reminds us of our wicked deeds. He reveals our lost, undone condition. Then in love and mercy He lifts us up and points us to Jesus, our only Saviour from sin. We are given a new revelation of Him upon the cross. We are reminded that it is our sins that have placed Him there. By our every sin He is wounded afresh.

This vision of Christ brings in its wake a deep sense of guilt, prompting a quest for something better. This consideration of Christ contrasts our unrighteousness with His perfection and awakens a desire for cleansing, for holiness, and for a pure life. "We mourn

for the sins that have brought anguish upon Him." With David the truly penitent is led to exclaim, "I will be sorry for my sin."

In Guatemala the Kekchi Indians have a good word for *repentance*. Its meaning is, "It pains my heart." In West Africa the Baouli people have perhaps an even better word for it. Their word means, "It hurts so much that I want to stop doing it."

This is the experience the prophet desired for the Lord's backslidden children when he said, "Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord." Lamentations 3:40. It is an individual, personal work of revival. It is not for me to pry critically into the experience of my neighbor. I am to turn the spotlight of God's Word inward and search and try my *own* ways. It is well enough to make others first in the normal course of our lives, but when it comes to getting right with God, we are admonished to begin with our own selves.

As we search, we may find many things which need straightening out. In Africa another interesting tribal word describes what happens to a person's heart when he repents. The Northern Sotho say, "*It becomes untwisted.*" This is just what God wants. We are to get all those crooked things untwisted—straightened out.

Some pain may result from this untwisting process. God permits it to hurt enough that we shall want to stop doing wrong and turn again to Him. This is what the Chol Indians of southern Mexico mean when they describe repentance as "the heart turning itself back."

"The worldling may pronounce this sorrow a weakness; but it is the strength which binds the penitent to the Infinite One with links that cannot be broken."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 300. May God grant us His convicting power and His enabling grace that we may abhor the sins which separate us from Him, and that true repentance will mark the beginning of a new experience. END

ARE YOU saved?" an evangelist asked a man attending a religious crusade.

"No, but I would like to be," was the somewhat indifferent reply.

"Is it because you realize you are a sinner?" the minister continued.

"Oh, of course, we're all sinners!"

"But are you a sinner yourself?" the evangelist pressed.

"Well, I suppose I am, but not what you'd call a bad sinner. In fact, I think I'm a fairly good person, as good as the average, at least."

"Then," replied the minister thoughtfully, "as long as you feel that way, there is little I can do to help you find the way of salvation. Good sinners, along with truthful liars, honest thieves, and upright scoundrels, are far from being ready to accept of the proffered grace of God. This grace is for the poor unworthy sinner with no goodness to plead and no personal merit to build upon. God can help and save only one who is ready to be saved by the works and the merits of another—that One is the Lord Jesus Christ. I appeal to you to repent and seek Him with your whole heart."

Whether the self-satisfied suppliant repented and found his Saviour, I do not know. I do know, however, that some "good sinners" call themselves Christians, but they have never taken the first step in finding the peace and joy in Christ Jesus which He declares is essential. The Saviour said, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." Luke 13:3.

Whether we are overt sinners, never having given our hearts to the Lord, or are halting, failing, defeated saints, there is only one way to God. We must *repent!* We must fall helpless upon the Rock, Christ Jesus. This experience of self-abnegation is not an easy course for the natural heart to choose.

A young man was talking with Evangelist Moody on the subject of repentance. "It has never struck me," the young man declared. "What do you mean?" Moody asked. "Well," the



# ? Frank Answers

BY FRANK B. HOLBROOK

## **Does Acts 10:13-15 give authority for the eating of unclean flesh?**

The answer lies within the chapter itself. The dietary regulation pertaining to clean and unclean animals reaches back to Noah's time. (Genesis 7:2.) The designation at first was probably intended to mark the animals proper for sacrifice. (Genesis 8:20.) Up until Noah's time the only dietary God had prescribed was nonflesh in composition. (Genesis 1:29; 3:18.)

After the Flood, God permitted the eating of flesh without the blood, the flesh being from "clean" animals, which course was then followed by God's people. (Genesis 9:3, 4.) This regulation was reiterated under Moses. (Leviticus 11.) There is nothing typical about the restriction. God apparently designed that for health reasons holy people should live on as wholesome food as was possible to obtain.

The barrier between Jew and Gentile was extremely formidable in the days of Christ. The Gentile was considered unclean and lost. But such a viewpoint could not be properly cherished in the religion of Christ. In order to attract the attention of the church to the fact that Heaven made no distinction between nationalities when it came to the value of a soul, God chose to use the dietary regulations as a medium of approach.

Peter was shown in vision a grouping of unclean animals, and was commanded to kill and eat. His refusal to do so was reproved by the divine Voice, which affirmed, "What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common." Acts 10:15. Peter questioned in his mind the meaning of this strange vision. (Verse 17.) If it simply meant that certain animals once unfit for food had now been made fit for human consumption by the same God (!), then the message of the vision was obvious. But the apostle knew such an interpretation was wrong, and so he pondered its significance.

With the call of the messengers from the Gentile Cornelius, and his travel with them the next day, the meaning of it all finally dawned upon him. Addressing the centurion, Peter declared his newfound viewpoint: "Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or

come unto one of another nation; but *God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.*" "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." (Acts 10:28, 34, 35.)

When Peter returned home, he was immediately called upon to give an account for his visiting and eating with Gentiles. His fellow Christians considered his conduct highly improper. (Acts 11:1-3.) Peter's defense included the recounting of the vision of the unclean animals as the basis for his action. As a result the church did not conclude that they might now eat unclean flesh. Rather, they "glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life." (Acts 11:18.) Thus the import of this passage is plain, if we do not let our stomachs influence our senses!

**I have been told that a person who receives the Holy Spirit will speak in unknown tongues. Is this true? I received the Holy Spirit many years ago and was filled with love and joy, but I never spoke in tongues.**

I refer you to a careful study of 1 Corinthians 12. The true gift of tongues is one of several powers or abilities known as "spiritual gifts." (Verse 1.) The abilities are endowments of the

Holy Spirit, who thus enables each Christian to effectively serve the cause of Christ. (See Ephesians 4:7, 8, 11, 12.) The Spirit imparts these gifts of grace as He chooses and to whom He chooses. (Verses 4, 7, 11.) The gifts vary in importance, but each Christian is to be content with his ability and to serve according to his capacity. (Verses 14-18.) Christians do not necessarily have the same gifts and are not to be envious of one another if they don't. (Verses 27-31.)

The gift of tongues is the ability to speak languages other than one's natural tongue. It was bestowed to enable Christians to communicate the gospel to those persons who could not understand because of a language barrier. (See Acts 2:1-12.) The account given in 1 Corinthians 14 deals with the Corinthian perversion of this ability to speak in a foreign language. The common claim to tongues known as glosolalia—a kind of gibberish—is really a counterfeit of the true Biblical gift of languages.

The best evidence of the presence of the Holy Spirit in the life lies not in one's abilities. Rather, it is disclosed by a godly life—a Christlike love, peace, joy, patience—the fruit of the Spirit. (Galatians 5:22, 23.) A life revealing a connection with Christ is more indicative of the Spirit's operation than meaningless mumblings or outstanding talents.

**Please explain Revelation 19:11, 14. Could there be beautiful white horses in heaven?**

A simple reading of the Book of Revelation is sufficient to disclose the fact that its message is largely set forth in symbolic or figurative language. Deity, being omnipresent (Jeremiah 23:23, 24) is not dependent on literal horses for movement, much less angels who are described as moving with lightning speed (Ezekiel 1:14). In this passage the second advent of Christ is figuratively described. Our Lord is depicted as a victorious King invading the earth upon a white charger, followed by the angelic armies of heaven, who are also upon white horses. Elsewhere in the Scriptures the second advent is described in literal terms. See Matthew 24:30, 31.

END

*In this column Pastor Frank B. Holbrook answers questions regarding spiritual truth, ethical behavior, and Biblical understanding. Write to him c/o THESE TIMES, Box 59, Nashville, Tennessee 37202. Names are confidential. If a personal answer is desired, please send an addressed envelope. Only questions of general interest are published.*







# What Heaven Will Be Like

By Reuben W. Engstrom

Will disembodied spirits float around playing invisible harps?

**R**ECENTLY a group of ministers tried to reach the strange inhabitants of the national hippie haven in San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury district with the gospel. After some street preaching, they fanned out to visit them personally. "Don't you want to go to heaven?" was one question they asked. "Of course, but this is heaven," came the unexpected response.

This strange hippie subculture, based partly on Hindu backgrounds, features among the many tin buttons worn by its adherents, the popular one with the words "Nirvana now." Nirvana, the Hindu counterpart of "that better land," is their goal—but immediately. "Instant heaven" is thus added to the many "can't wait" requirements of modern man.

But just where is heaven? One scholar who inquired of many people where they thought heaven was, reported the main answer was "Up," and as to occupation, most thought it was "a spirit land, where disembodied spirits float around in space, playing invisible harps."

David Greenfield in the *Saturday Review* points out that "heaven has always existed in the mind of man as the abode of spiritual beings and the ultimate destination of believers. Its location has always been 'up.'" Thus, the grandly solemn Gothic architecture of the Christian era has spires and windows pointing upward into space, indicating outreach to the world beyond. "Somewhere beyond the blue," as the singer says, lies heaven.

Then suddenly, space-age man ascends into the heavens he so long adored. He travels physically in the very void he only gazed upon before. And what has he found? The Russian cosmonaut Titov complained on his return from space that he did not see God nor heaven, and concluded that if he could not see either, they must not exist. He is but one of many moderns who insist that they cannot believe what they cannot tangibly behold.

Unfortunately, many common descriptions of the eternal home are not as attractive, by far, as some spots on earth. One author points out that "it's not the Sacred Book but the funny paper that nowadays gives most people their ideas of the afterlife. The cartoon

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character drives over a cliff and the next moment he's dressed in a white bathrobe, sitting on a fluffy white cloud about the size of a flying carpet, strumming a harp. He wears a smug look on his face; a pair of oversized pigeon wings protrude from his shoulder blades; and a 24-karat halo perches over his head."

Who wants to spend eternity this way? or be so small that ten million souls can dance on the point of a needle, as one theologian describes it. We are told that a group of religious leaders spent three days discussing the space that redeemed souls would occupy and ended up by saying that they will occupy absolutely no space. Who is interested in a future where you will be reduced to nothing at all?

Someone has pointed out that the popular idea of heaven would be almost as bad as going to hell. "What would be a more terrible fate for the righteous dead than to spend unnumbered eons in enforced idleness, uselessness, and perfect boredom? Could the wicked suffer a fate much worse than this supposed weightless semi-transparent existence as a 'soul,' with no chance to shut off the everlasting harp music?" True, a choice between eternal torment and eternal boredom would be rather difficult to make.

Then we find that well-meaning hymn writers have tried to comfort weary earth wanderers with the thought that heaven is a "land of eternal rest." This hasn't much appeal, either, because healthy people (and we can't conceive of a "sick" heaven) would hardly know what to do with themselves under such conditions.

What, then, is the truth about heaven?

The sacred Bible's first verse contains the word *heaven*, and heaven is described on its final page. Between these two references to heaven unfolds the greatest subject of all—the eternal home for everyone who sincerely looks beyond the horizon of earthly life.

We find in Holy Writ that heaven is the grand climax of all sacred prophecy. One third of the Bible is prophetic, and nearly one thousand predictions fill its pages. Biblical foretelling is not an unrelated string of prophecies with no particular end in view, but it is, rather, a grand march toward the second advent of our Lord—and heaven.

Jesus Himself, on His last night on earth before the cross, plainly told His



*The prophet Isaiah said that in heaven  
the wolf and the lamb will feed together.*





followers the truth about heaven: "In my Father's house are many mansions: . . . I go to prepare a place for you. . . . I will come again, and receive you unto myself." John 14:2, 3.

Then forty days after the crucifixion, Jesus ascended on high: "And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." Acts 1:9-11.

Donald Barnhouse put it well: "If we did not believe that there was a heaven, a locality, we could not believe in the ascension of Christ. If we did not believe in the resurrection, we could not believe in the atoning death of our Lord. We would be yet in our sins."

But just where is heaven? Again, we return to divine revelation, and an amazing story unfolds—not a fantastic or weird one, but a very reasonable one.

The many references to the word *heaven* in Scripture indicate it is actually not just one spot or locality, but many. Most Old Testament references simply refer to the atmosphere and the outer space around it. The "birds of heaven" are mentioned, then the stars, sun, and moon in "the heaven." Occasionally heaven has a different meaning, as where the Lord through His prophet says, "The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool." Isaiah 66:1.

Thus heaven is not just one localized spot. It includes all in the vast universe that is in harmony with God. Wherever God is in control, wherever there is life and love and obedience and purity and happiness, there is heaven. As we look up to the stars, which in their orbits obey His will, we look into the heavens.

But heaven for us is also a certain location, for real beings must have a tangible dwelling place. At one time this earth was a part of God's heaven. Though sin came, the final three chapters of the Bible grandly predict a restoration of heaven on earth.

At the beginning of creation, God made the earth and placed man in it. They belong together. Because of sin, it has not been a happy union, but

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Illustration by Bill Myers



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God's purpose is the same, and here are some indications of what He has in mind:

"But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace." Psalm 37:11. Jesus Himself emphasizes this same thought: "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth." Matthew 5:5. And the wisest man, Solomon, adds, "The righteous shall be recompensed in the earth."

This earth, of course, needs to be renewed, for it could not be a heaven in its present state. So Isaiah, the gospel prophet, predicts, "Behold, I [God] create new heavens and a new earth" (Isaiah 65:17); and the last of all Bible writers, John, in Revelation 21:1 emphasizes his own vision of the future: "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away."

What strikes us most is the blessed reality of these things. Jesus tells us the resurrected faithful will be like Him. The risen Jesus had a real body. His disciples could feel His nail prints. They could talk to Him, eat with Him. So the eternal home of the new earth will be real. The Bible mentions many parts of heaven, such as the tree of life, the river of life, the throne of God, the foundations, and the streets. Isaiah speaks of it as a place where we shall do constructive work. (Isaiah 65:21, 22.)

While actual details of the heavenly abodes are limited to just a few snatches here and there to give some idea of the infinite beauties beyond, there are some vivid indications of

what is to be. Paul, in Hebrews 11:16, says of the ancient worthies, "But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city." Here heaven on earth is to center about a celestial city. Verse 10 says, "For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."

Paul, in his immortal Hebrews 11, shows that the vision of heaven enabled the great army of ancient believers to endure indescribable hardships. And finally he notes that the Lord Jesus Himself "for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame." It was the true vision of a true heaven that gave victory.

It is reserved for the two final chapters of Holy Writ—said to be the most beautiful of all—to describe this City, the New Jerusalem. But even here, we wish the revelator might have told us more of what he saw. Most of the space is devoted to a detailed analysis of the twelve foundations of the New Jerusalem, but scarcely anything is said about the City itself. It has been aptly suggested, though, that the foundations are about the only part we earthbound folk can grasp. If they are so exquisitely lovely, how much more wonderful must be the City itself! Apparently the inspired John, who wrote the chapter, could do no more, for he doubtless recalled the words of Paul, who said that "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." (1 Corinthians 2:9.)

This majestic ending to the Bible gives the final answers to our earth-born questions when our hearts have been stirred about heaven, such as: When will heaven for us actually come? What are the conditions of entrance? Who is invited to be there?

The Lord Jesus, who speaks directly to us on this final page, plainly says that heaven will come on earth after His second coming. "Behold . . . my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." In chapter 20, the narrative briefly tells us that after a thousand years' reign with Him in glory, the final judgment takes place, and then the "new heavens" and the "new earth" will come to our planet.

The conditions? Simply our desire to obey His reasonable rule of life through His power. So verse 14 says, "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."

And finally, who will be chosen? This is the most precious message of all, for verse 17 indicates that "whosoever will" may come. This is all-inclusive. Everyone is included, the condition simply being that we must be willing. If we are, God through Jesus Christ will do the rest.

Heaven is real, it is unbelievably worthwhile, and we are urgently invited to be citizens. Shall we accept? **END**

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THESE TIMES





**A**T TIMES scientists make discoveries that astonish even themselves. Such happened on the night of May 24, 1965, when for the first time in history man was able to follow the exact course of a migrating bird through the night.

On this date several migrating birds were captured. The one chosen for the experiment was a young thrush. It was the season when migratory species were heading north to their ancestral home, where they would establish their homes and rear their young before making the return trip south.

A tiny transmitter was glued to the feathers on the thrush's back, and the bird was released. Local receivers began to monitor the signals and keep track of the bird's movements.

Being a young bird of the first year, the thrush had never before made the trip, and its location on that date already represented a journey of some two thousand miles from its winter home. A few hundred miles remained before it would reach its Canadian nesting ground.

Not many years ago experiments confirmed the theory that these small feathered creatures actually navigate by the stars. We could easily liken the flight of this thrush to the voyage of Columbus, who sailed trackless seas with only the stars to guide his course. Neither of them knew the destination, but both demonstrated unswerving dependence on the stars they followed.

## **A Good and Perfect Gift**

**By James A. Tucker**

As evening approached in central Illinois, the receivers began to pick up definite movement, and at exactly 7:55 P.M., C.S.T., the bird took to the air. A quick takeoff later, two men were also in the air by plane, and soon their receiver had the bird's signal. Shortly, it was possible to determine the course of the flying thrush, and by following far enough above so as not to disturb it, the plane droned on into the night.

The course lay slightly east of north, and with the help of a stiff tail wind the bird made surprisingly good time—just under fifty miles an hour. Their course lay directly over the city of Chicago. Would the bird lose its way? Static was too great to hear the signal, so the men in the plane charted the course and timed the estimated arrival of the bird at a point north of the city. Sure enough, the signal came in on schedule and on course. The course now lay up the length of Lake Michigan. Could the thrush hold out? So far it had maintained a surprisingly constant speed and an even more amazingly accurate course.

Ironically the plane had to refuel, while the thrush flew steadily on. By

extending a line based on the bird's course up to that time the pilot was able to predict where they would pick it up again after stopping in Wisconsin for fuel.

The rendezvous was on time and on course, but a bank of storm clouds now prohibited the plane from following the bird much farther. The thrush flew on undaunted as if it knew that land lay just ahead in the form of a tiny island over which it would pass as dawn was breaking.

The men in the plane, humbled at their own inability to penetrate further the secrets they had seen so faintly, returned to ponder for many nights to come just what lay hidden in the bird's ability to follow a course so exactly with no charts or instruments.

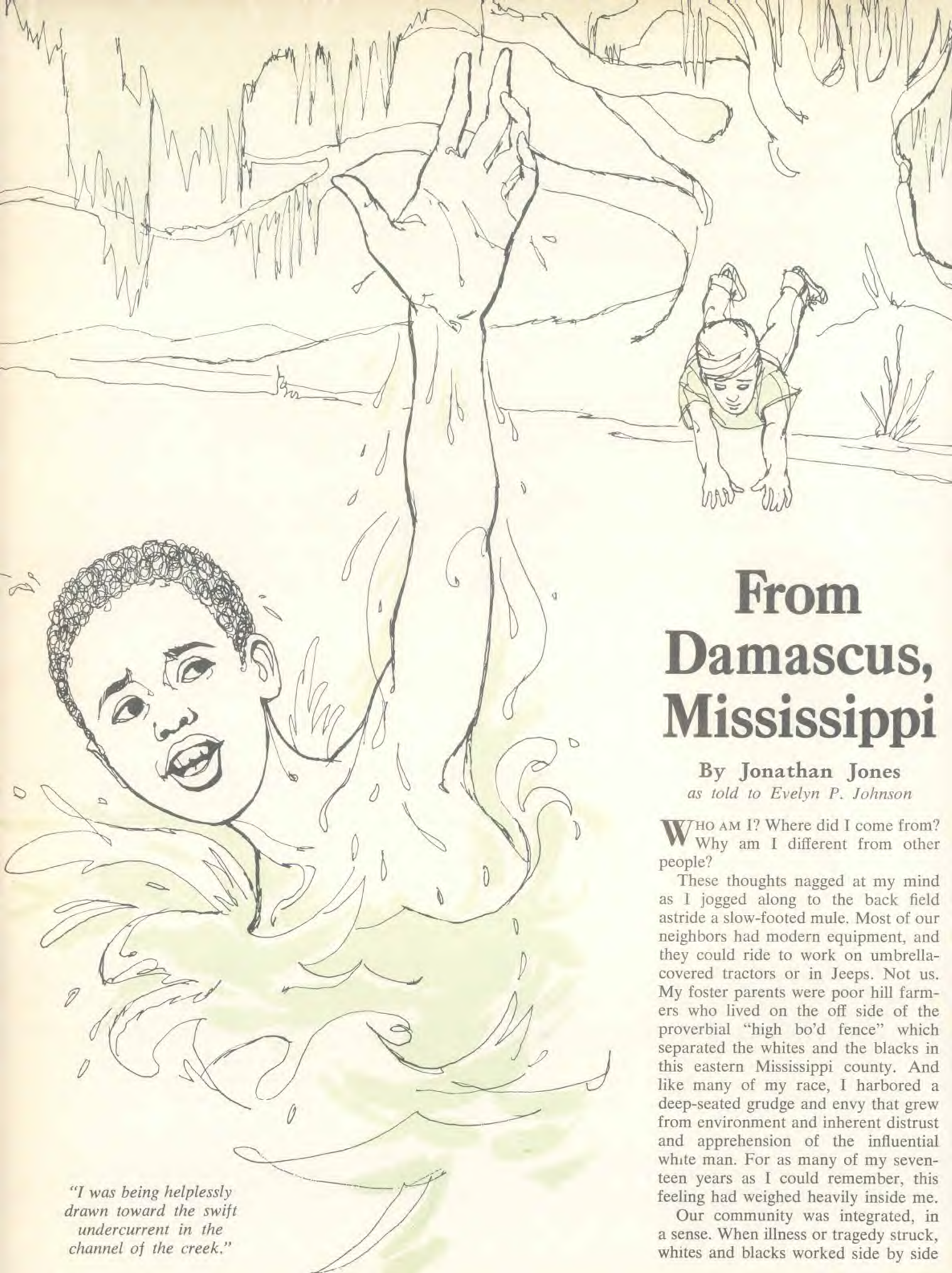
James clearly explained, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." James 1:17.

For eight hours man and bird had traveled the night together. Man's ability depended on years of training. The bird's ability was somehow inherited. Both used the gift God had given them.

When will we learn to follow the wisdom that has come to us from "the Father of lights"? It is a path of security, because with Him there is "no variableness, neither shadow of turning."

END





# From Damascus, Mississippi

By Jonathan Jones  
as told to Evelyn P. Johnson

**W**HO AM I? Where did I come from? Why am I different from other people?

These thoughts nagged at my mind as I jogged along to the back field astride a slow-footed mule. Most of our neighbors had modern equipment, and they could ride to work on umbrella-covered tractors or in Jeeps. Not us. My foster parents were poor hill farmers who lived on the off side of the proverbial "high bo'd fence" which separated the whites and the blacks in this eastern Mississippi county. And like many of my race, I harbored a deep-seated grudge and envy that grew from environment and inherent distrust and apprehension of the influential white man. For as many of my seventeen years as I could remember, this feeling had weighed heavily inside me.

Our community was integrated, in a sense. When illness or tragedy struck, whites and blacks worked side by side

*"I was being helplessly drawn toward the swift undercurrent in the channel of the creek."*



to bring relief. This was tradition. But despite this seemingly ideal relationship, something inside us always kept my race on the defensive.

It was this inborn rebellion that made the distant big city I kept hearing about sound good to me. Reports from my young friends who had been there painted a picture of a land of freedom with golden opportunities and new companions—companions of my own choosing—a land where I would not be ostracized because of the color of my skin.

Perspiration streaked the dust on my face, and I glanced longingly at the inviting waters of Little Sand Creek that flowed along the honeysuckle-covered fencerow. So what if I *were* late getting back to the plow? My foster father was strict, but he was also understanding.

He and my foster mother, really my uncle and aunt, had given me the only love I had ever known. My mother had died when I was six, and my father, unable to care for me alone, had agreed for my relatives to bring me up as their own.

I slid off the mule and hitched it to a fence post. Vaulting the fence, I ran toward the creek bank, peeling off my clothes as I ran. Just as I hit the water, I heard voices and caught a glimpse of several white boys standing in the shade of the willows across the creek.

It was too late to retreat, but since they were leaving, I was safe. Soon I hoped to leave for that new land where I'd be free to swim wherever I wished—and with whomever I wished! I forgot about my audience as the icy waters enveloped my steaming body. I waded out, deeper, deeper, until the water slapped gently at my armpits. I stretched out my arms and kicked against the creek bed to boost myself into a watery orbit.

Then something happened to the muscles of my shoulders. Big lumps suddenly puffed up under my shoulder blades and a tightening sensation crept around into my chest. My arms seemed to be weighted down with shop anvils. I was in serious trouble.

I tried to lift my head above the surface and cry for help, but I had lost my sense of direction. Every movement was against nothing but water, and I was being helplessly drawn toward the swift undercurrent in the channel of the creek.

I held my breath as long as I could, but finally I was forced to open my

mouth and gulp for air. My lungs filled with muddy creek water. It started getting dark—mentally dark. The rushing waters sounded like underground thunder. Then from the very lowest edge of my fading consciousness, I found myself being pulled to the surface.

Although I was barely conscious and momentarily balanced on that thin wall that marks the boundary between life and death, there were some details and sensations that registered so clearly that, even now, I have but to close my eyes to live through it all again.

I can still feel the grip of the human hand that found mine and started pulling me up. I was aware that the hand holding mine was very small, much smaller than my own. And it seemed to be the sweetest hand I have ever touched—and the strongest, as, a few minutes later, it rolled and pummeled my body to remove some of the water I had swallowed and to start me breathing again.

I recognized my rescuer as Clayton Cooper, the eleven-year-old son of one of the white farmers near us. Clayton had been in the group of boys leaving the creek and had seen me floundering in the water. Without hesitating, he had dived in, swam to the spot where I had gone down, and went under the surface to a depth of eight feet to pull me out.

Clayton was an expert swimmer, having been trained by older members of his family since he was five. But, even so, his bravery, undaunted courage, and total disregard for his personal safety was a feat at which many older persons with more experience would have balked. He had definitely risked his life to save mine.

To me he will always be a hero, but I know that such brave actions happen every day somewhere. It is not the uniqueness of his act that prompted me to tell about it. Rather, I would have others know how the experience changed my way of thinking and feeling, not only toward white men but toward humanity as a whole. Why did this young white boy risk his life to save that of a drowning Negro? His answer to that question is the real reason for my story.

Clayton's father, working nearby, had heard the commotion and had come to the scene just as his son had completed the rescue. After hearing the details, Mr. Cooper said, "Son, you have done a very brave thing. You've saved a life, and I'm proud of

you. But do you realize that what you did was also a very dangerous thing? Grappling with a drowning person underwater is a quick way to get yourself drowned."

The boy replied, "Yes, Daddy, I knew it was dangerous, but I had to try to save him, 'cause he'd have done the same thing for me."

These were the last words I expected to hear from the lips of a white person. Before wading into the creek that day, I had felt that all white people looked upon all Negroes as subhuman—a species of creatures with slightly more than animal and slightly less than human intelligence. I even found it easy to believe that any show of friendliness by white people toward Negroes was really camouflage, its purpose being to keep us lulled into a state of complacency with no concept of what the Emancipation Proclamation meant to our race and no initiative or desire to take advantage of what it offered—just another form of modern slavery.

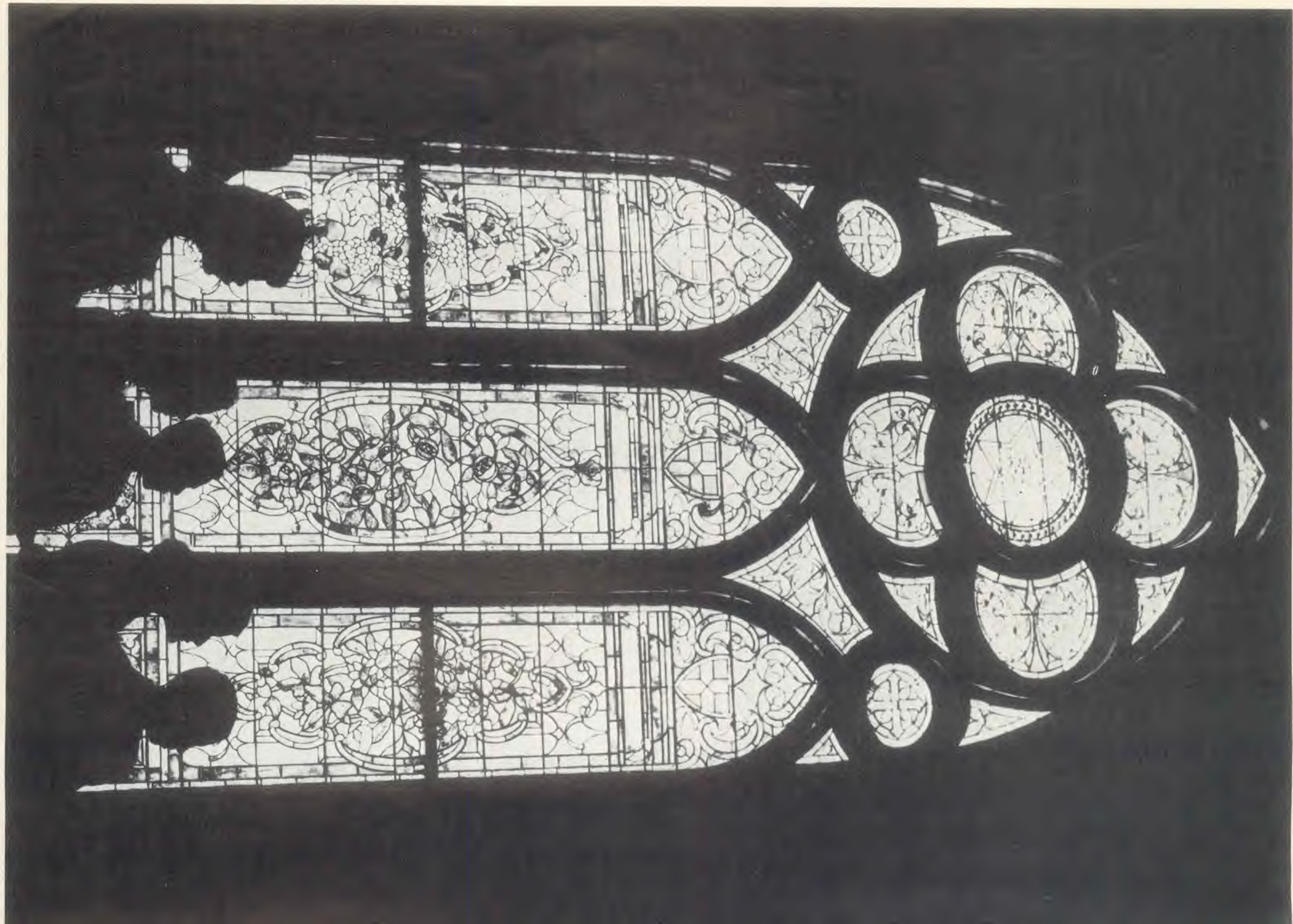
And now, one of the last persons from whom I would have expected help in a life-and-death situation had actually risked his life to save mine, had taken my hand and lifted me from the depths of a watery grave and then said, "He would have done the same for me." I challenge anyone to invent a more beautiful phrase for "brother"! His words swept the scales from my eyes, and I saw Clayton Cooper, not as an enemy in disguise, but as a friend, who, if our positions had been reversed, would have trusted me with the most precious thing he possessed—his life.

That precious hand also lifted me from something more dark, horrible, and soul-wrecking than the waters of Sand Creek. It lifted me from a potential life of hatred, fear, distrust, and chip-on-the-shoulder existence that is always more deadly and destructive to the perpetrator than to the person toward whom it is directed.

I do not pretend to believe that all white boys today would do what Clayton did under similar circumstances. Nor do I believe that my experience would produce the same human reaction with every Negro man. There will be racial problems as long as there are different races, but no one has ever solved any problem by running away from it.

Clayton Cooper gave the only workable answer through his unselfish act and in his comment. END







# God's Beautiful Sabbath—Foretaste of Heaven

By Kenneth J. Holland

Here is a day to explore the wonders of God, to be an artist of sorts in spiritual things. A single Sabbath can bring man to spiritual heights never thought possible.

**T**HERE ARE some things we do not believe unless we understand them. There are other things we do not understand unless we believe them."

Augustine, the great churchman, may not have had the Sabbath in mind when he penned this truth, but the mysterious beauty of God's holy day is understandable only to those who believe what God has said about the Sabbath and have put Him to the test. There are joys unspeakable for those who come to worship Him on His day. Here is God's clear statement:

"Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it." Exodus 20:8-11.

Ever since I first kept the seventh-day Sabbath several years ago, I have sensed its awesome, heavenly qualities. I have a keen sense of anticipation as the Sabbath begins at sundown Friday. The holy atmosphere continues throughout the Sabbath hours. And then an aura of sadness descends upon me like a blanket as the spirit of the

work week begins to crowd out the Sabbath joys as sundown nears on Saturday night.

It is said that religion is an art, not a science. The Sabbath affords an entire day to explore the wonders of God, to be an artist of sorts in spiritual things. Imagine an entire day each week given to oneness with the person Jesus Christ! It is a day for the young and the old, for the poor and the wealthy, for the unschooled and the educated, for the weak and the strong. A single Sabbath can bring man to spiritual heights never thought possible. It is always gratifying, restful, inspiring, exciting. It satisfies the soul with seemingly inexhaustible supplies of grace. And during the weekdays there is always that same anticipation of the Sabbath. The poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge puts it, "I feel as if God had, by giving the Sabbath, given fifty-two springs in every year."

We can hardly exalt the Sabbath enough. It is the climax, not only of the week, but of living itself! Abraham Heschel, a great Jewish philosopher, says, "To the biblical mind . . . labor is the means toward an end, and the Sabbath as a day of rest, as a day of abstaining from toil, is not for the purpose of recovering one's lost strength and becoming fit for the forthcoming labor. The Sabbath is a day for the sake of life. Man is not a beast of burden, and the Sabbath is not for the purpose of enhancing the efficiency of his

work. 'Last in creation, first in intention,' the Sabbath is 'the end of the creation of heaven and earth.'"—From *The Sabbath, Its Meaning for Modern Man*, p. 14.

Some Sabbaths, of course, are more memorable than others. But always during the week there is the intriguing question, What treasure will God have for me this time? It may turn out to be a gem from the sermon, a blessed conversation with a fellow believer, a heightened realization of His presence. But none of this is possible or understandable unless we believe what God says about His Sabbath, unless we take Him at His word.

Why do men not believe the Sabbath promises? Has God spoken for naught? But then, God has chosen the simple things to confound the mighty. Herman Wouk, in his book *This Is My God*, has this to say about the Sabbath:

"I have come home. It has been a startling change, very like a brief return from the wars. My wife and my boys, whose existence I have almost forgotten, . . . are waiting for me, gay, dressed in holiday clothes, and looking to me marvellously attractive. . . . The boys are at home, . . . and they like it. They like even more the assured presence of their parents. . . . It is their day.

"It is my day, too. The telephone is silent. I can think, read, study, walk, or do nothing. It is an oasis of quiet.

*Continued*



*Continued*

... My producer one Saturday night said to me, 'I don't envy you your religion, but I envy you your Sabbath.'"  
—Pp. 59, 60. (Doubleday and Company, Inc.)

Think of it! Here is a day dedicated wholly to communion with God. He it is who can teach you more in one moment by His Holy Spirit than you could learn in years from the great men of the earth. Heschel puts it: "Six days a week we wrestle with the world, wringing profit from the earth; on the Sabbath we especially care for the seed of eternity planted in the soul. The world has our hands, but our soul belongs to Someone Else. Six days a week we seek to dominate the world, on the seventh day we try to dominate the self."

Here is a day with no television, no radio, no newspapers, no business with the stores. All secular pursuits are put aside. The mind is at peace. The whole being seeks oneness with Christ. Gone are tensions, forgotten the pressures of everyday life. The world is shut out, and for twenty-four hours a bit of heaven descends. This is what God has intended for all men.

"How should we weigh the difference between the Sabbath and the other days of the week?" asks Heschel. "When a day like Wednesday arrives, the hours are blank, and unless we lend significance to them, they remain without character. The hours of the seventh day are significant in themselves; their significance and beauty do not depend on any work, profit or progress we may achieve. They have the beauty of grandeur."

And because God reserves His finest blessings for the Sabbath, Satan has cleverly chosen to attack this Sabbath institution which God through His Son Jesus Christ gave to mankind during the first week of creation. The Sabbath is Jesus' master work. The hand that sustains the worlds in space, the hand that holds in their orderly arrangement and tireless activity all things throughout the universe of God, the hand that gave all mankind the holy Sabbath, is the hand that was nailed to the cross for us. The Sabbath is Christ's day, His beautiful day. And Satan knows it.

Mankind has long been aware of the great battle between Christ and Satan for the souls of men. This is the classic struggle between good and evil. Let us now take a look at how this conflict between Christ and Satan started. It is



a fascinating story, and the Sabbath is an exceedingly important part of it.

In the very beginning, long before our world came into being, the God-head presided over a perfect universe. All of God's created beings throughout the immensity of space loved Him, worshiped Him, and found complete satisfaction in their existence. One note of harmony rang throughout immensity. How long this went on, for how many aeons, we cannot know.

And then an amazing, incomprehensible change took place. The Bible calls it a mystery. One of the angels, the leader of the angelic hosts, named Lucifer, began to harbor evil thoughts. The Bible in Ezekiel 28:15 puts it this way: "Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee."

Here was an angel, a created being, who had been chosen of God to sit near His throne, to lead the angelic choir, to carry messages to the other angels. His name meant "Lightbearer."

He was as wise as he was handsome. But, nonunderstandable to us, he became jealous of Christ, the Son of God. He felt that God the Father was letting Christ in on secrets that should have been shared with him as leader of the angelic host.

No doubt this rebellious spirit took a long time to manifest itself in overt action. But finally the day came when Lucifer decided not to obey the laws of heaven. He said in his heart, "I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: . . . I will be like the most High." Isaiah 14:13, 14. So brilliant and deceptive was Lucifer that he got many of his angel friends to consider revolt with him. He offered them a new and better government in which there would be no laws and no restrictions.

At this time heaven was an exceedingly strange place. Gone were the joys and the peace of former times. Chaos was the order of the day. Created beings who had long enjoyed face-to-face fellowship with the Father and the Son were plotting open rebellion against the great eternal God. Lucifer tried to blame God for all the trouble he himself started. His plan was to conquer all of heaven and capture all the worlds, too.

God, of course, could have destroyed Lucifer and the revolting angels immediately, but He knew what would happen if He did: The other angels would remain loyal only out of fear.

God the Father insisted on obedience to the Son, the same as to Himself. He made it plain that the happiness of the angels depended on following the laws under which they had been created. On the other hand, Lucifer pushed for his point that he and his angel followers should be free to follow their own minds—laws merely interfered with their freedom.

Amazingly, one third of the angels sided with Lucifer, and then there was war in heaven. Revelation 12:7 states: "And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels." The Son and His loyal angels fought against Lucifer and his angels. And the loyal angels won the battle. The inevitable result was that the rebel angels and Lucifer were pushed out of heaven.

Soon thereafter God carried out His plan to create a new world—and called it Earth. But He knew He must find some way to test the loyalty of the in-



habitants, for He did not want to risk another rebellion in heaven. The test should be easy. If any should fail the test, he should not be able to truthfully say it was too hard.

The plan? One fruit tree in the Garden would be selected, and the people would be instructed not to eat of the fruit or even touch it. That would be the test.

The plan was perfect. There were plenty of other trees laden with food so that none need go hungry. God knew that Lucifer would test man, too. The entire story is found in the first three chapters of the Bible.

The sad result of Adam and Eve's fall is well known to everyone. Also well known is the fact that Jesus, the Son, offered to take the punishment and pay the price for anyone who might fail the test.

Lucifer, the great adversary of man, is also called Satan, Beelzebub, the devil, the liar, the tempter, the enemy, the evil one, and the deceiver. His first recorded act on earth was, in the guise of a serpent, to persuade Eve to distrust the goodness of God, to doubt His word, and to reject His authority—and through her he caused the fall of Adam. He thus enlisted the human race on his side of the great struggle against the divine government, and ever since has occupied himself in ensnaring, deceiving, beguiling, and seducing mankind.

After inciting men to sin, he accuses them before God as unworthy of divine mercy. In his role as deceiver he first misrepresents God before man and then man before God, with the purpose of bringing about eternal estrangement between God and man. He then accuses God before the universe as being to blame for this situation. When he cannot subvert man's loyalty to God, he accuses God of unfairness and seeks to destroy man. And so to hold people in darkness and impenitence until the bitter end is the aim of Lucifer.

Lucifer and his evil angels know that they will never again be allowed to return to heaven. They have dedicated themselves, therefore, to causing all the trouble they can. Lucifer, God's loveliest angel, has become the devil, the evil enemy. We no longer call him Lucifer, but Satan, the great enemy of God.

From the days of Adam and Eve Satan has carried on a relentless war against God and His law. And, of course, in the center of God's Ten Commandment law is the Sabbath,

which has been a prime target of Satan's hatred right from the start. And he has done a masterful job of all but obliterating it from the hearts of men.

From the first week of human history man has had the Sabbath institution. Patriarchs like Enoch and Noah and Abraham passed the Sabbath truth on from generation to generation. Later, Moses received the Sabbath along with the other commandments on Mount Sinai, and the Jews as a people became the appointed custodians of the day. They were to share its blessings with other nations, so for the first four thousand years of man's life on earth, the Sabbath was the day honored by God's people.

Naturally, right from the start Satan contested God's day. He did this by causing men to worship nature instead of the God of nature and to worship the sun. Sun worship was the earliest form of idolatry in all the nations around Palestine. After the death of all the apostles the early church soon became filled with those whom some early writers called "heathen Christians." It was this influence of pagan converts that brought in Sunday, their venerable day, which gradually, though slowly, displaced the Sabbath. Changes which followed during the second and third centuries strengthened this heathen element in the church, and at length we find the sun worship at Rome.

By the growth of sun worship Sunday was naturally exalted in the Roman Empire and necessarily in the church, which was being steadily crowded by heathen converts. And so from the earliest days of the Christian era Sunday worship has claimed the affection of the great majority of God's people, although a nucleus has always kept the true Sabbath through the centuries after Christ.

Now in these last days God has brought the Sabbath truth to the fore again; and just before Christ returns, the Sabbath is destined to become the supreme test of loyalty.

Those who are in doubt as to whether the Sabbath is God's true day should consider the fact that in heaven itself the ransomed ones will worship on that day. "For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh

come to worship before me, saith the Lord." Isaiah 66:22, 23.

The beauty the Sabbath brings to life now will find its ultimate fulfillment there. Listen as Ellen G. White writes of the hereafter:

"There we shall know even as also we are known. There the loves and sympathies that God has planted in the soul will find truest and sweetest exercise. The pure communion with holy beings, the harmonious social life with the blessed angels and with the faithful ones of all ages, the sacred fellowship that binds together 'the whole family in heaven and earth,'—all are among the experiences of the hereafter.

"There will be music there, and song, such music and song as, save in the visions of God, no mortal ear has heard or mind conceived.

"'As well the singers as the players on instruments shall be there.' Psalm 87:7. 'They shall lift up their voice, they shall sing for the majesty of Jehovah.' Isaiah 24:14.

"'For the Lord shall comfort Zion; He will comfort all her waste places; and He will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody.' Isaiah 51:3.

"There every power will be developed, every capability increased. The grandest enterprises will be carried forward, the loftiest aspirations will be reached, the highest ambitions realized. And still there will arise new heights to surmount, new wonders to admire, new truths to comprehend, fresh objects to call forth the powers of body and mind and soul.

"All the treasures of the universe will be open to the study of God's children. With unutterable delight we shall enter into the joy and the wisdom of unfallen beings. We shall share the treasures gained through ages upon ages spent in contemplation of God's handiwork. And the years of eternity, as they roll, will continue to bring more glorious revelations. 'Exceeding abundant above all that we ask or think' (Ephesians 3:20) will be, forever and forever, the impartation of the gifts of God."—*Education*, pp. 306, 307.

Intriguing indeed is this picture of the joys of heaven. Glorious also is the thought that God intends that His Sabbath day be a foretaste of the blessed hereafter. And wonder of wonders, this day—this beautiful day—can be yours!

END





ONLY a little more than a century ago man's most rapid means of communication was by special courier on horseback. The United States' greatest land victory in the War of 1812 took place two weeks after peace had been declared, because the British and American commanders in charge had not heard that the war was over!

Today it is possible to reach practically every person in the civilized world almost instantaneously with important news.

#### A GRAVE INTERNATIONAL CRISIS

Like a clap of thunder the crisis over Cuba broke upon an unsuspecting world October 22, 1962. In a dramatic half hour that night fifty million Americans saw and heard the President of the United States present the sobering facts by radio and television and announce the course of action the government proposed to take.

Sheaves of photographs had furnished staggering proof of a massive, breakneck buildup of Soviet ballistic missiles. Already in position were several medium-range missiles able to visit nuclear destruction on such cities as Washington, D.C.; St. Louis, Missouri;

and Dallas, Texas. As the President spoke, one third of the nation was only moments away from possible annihilation. Other launching sites were being readied for intermediate-range missiles that could be hurled at cities as far away as Los Angeles. Jet bombers with nuclear capability were being uncased and assembled.

Commented the President: This "urgent transformation of Cuba into an important strategic base by the presence of these long-range and clearly offensive weapons . . . constitutes an explicit threat to the peace and security of all the Americas." He branded the "secret, swift, extraordinary buildup" a "deliberately provocative and unjustified change in the *status quo* which cannot be accepted by this country if our courage and our commitments are ever to be trusted again, by either friend or foe."

#### AN INFINITELY GREATER CRISIS

Today, another and infinitely greater crisis looms ominously on the horizon. Arnold J. Toynbee, perhaps the greatest living historian, warns that "our civilization is in its time of troubles." He speaks of a "swift succession of

catastrophic events on a steeply mounting gradient," which he says "inevitably inspires a dark doubt about our future, and this doubt threatens to undermine our faith and hope at a critical eleventh hour which calls for the utmost exertion of these saving faculties."

The nature of the great crisis that confronts us today, in the space age, is vividly set forth in the thirteenth chapter of the Book of Revelation, last book of the Bible. This prophecy points forward to a time when church and state will unite to coerce the conscience, a time when the civil law will be brought into sharp and relentless opposition to the revealed will of God, a time when every man will be compelled to choose between allegiance to human authority and allegiance to divine authority.

According to Holy Writ, an attempt is to be made to brainwash the world into accepting the leadership of Satan, disguised as Christ. The vast majority of the human race will be deceived, and those who choose to be loyal to God will not find it easy to stand alone. That will be a time to try men's souls, a time when only those who purpose to be true to God at the cost of life itself, if need be, will be able to resist the tremendous forces exerted to shake



In Revelation 14:6-12

God broadcasts His

# Last Warning to the World

By Raymond Cottrell

their faith. Only those who prepare for that time of crisis now, by making Christ the center and circumference of their lives, will stand firm in that day.

## A DIVINE WARNING

Happily, God has not left the world to drift blindly into that fearful future crisis. He has provided sufficient information concerning the issues involved to enable us to prepare intelligently for it, and has promised a special gift of divine grace and fortitude to all who choose to remain loyal to Him. In the threefold message recorded in Revelation 14:6-12 God warns specifically against the satanic program foretold in chapter 13, and broadcasts His own last urgent appeal to the world. Of the fact that it is, indeed, the last call of divine mercy there can be no doubt, for immediately following its proclamation John saw Christ descending from heaven to reap earth's harvest. (Revelation 14:14-20.)

Seen in this perspective, the threefold message of Revelation 14:6-12 deserves our closest scrutiny. Here John relates that he saw three angels in orbit around the earth—or "flying in mid-heaven," as he expresses it—where they can readily be seen and heard by

all men everywhere, one following another in rapid succession and each in turn proclaiming his own distinctive part of the appeal. How could a universal message for men in the space age, with its spaceships and communications satellites, have been pictured more appropriately? In the symbolism of the Book of Revelation these angels represent the church as it completes the gospel commission originally entrusted to it by Christ. (Matthew 28:19, 20.) In the divine economy of the plan of salvation, Heaven's messages to men are always proclaimed by His loyal representatives on earth.

## THE FIRST ANGEL'S MESSAGE

In a loud, clear voice, the first of the three angels addresses his message "to those who dwell on earth, to every nation and tribe and tongue and people." (Revelation 14:6, R.S.V.) It is universal in application, and it is given in a manner to command worldwide attention.

This angel, says John, has the "eternal gospel" to proclaim. What, we ask, is the "eternal gospel"? The word *gospel* means "good news." According to the Scriptures, the gospel is the good news that "God so loved the world,"

lost as it was in sin, "that he gave his only . . . Son" to be our Saviour, and that "while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." It is the good news that "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself," and that "while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son." It is the good news that although "the wages of sin is death," nevertheless "the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord," and that "whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16, R.S.V.; Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:19; Romans 5:10; 6:23, R.S.V.)

But that is not all. The everlasting gospel is also the good news that Christ "rose again" from the grave, that He "ascended to the Father," and that He "always lives to make intercession" for us. Finally, it includes the good news that soon, very soon, Jesus "will appear a second time, . . . to save those who are eagerly waiting for him," and to inaugurate His own eternal, righteous reign. (1 Thessalonians 4:14; John 20:17, R.S.V.; Hebrews 7:25; 9:28, R.S.V.)

In tones to which no one can plead deaf this angel proclaims, "Fear God

*Continued*



*Continued*

and give him glory, for the hour of his judgment has come; and worship him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the fountains of water." Revelation 14:7, R.S.V. This solemn proclamation summons men to reverence and honor God, and to make Him first in their lives.

But there is also a new note to this message—God's great final judgment hour has struck! The certainty of a great final day of judgment that brings this age to a close and ushers in God's eternal kingdom was stressed by the Bible writers generally. Paul, for instance, declared that God "has fixed a day on which he will judge the world." (Acts 17:31, R.S.V.) He wrote to the Christians at Rome about "that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men" (Romans 2:16, R.S.V.), and to those at Corinth, "We must *all* appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive good or evil, according to what he has done in the body." (2 Corinthians 5:10, R.S.V.) Solemn thought indeed!

#### THE SECOND ANGEL'S MESSAGE

Following close behind the first angel comes the second, proclaiming the second part of the threefold message: "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who made all nations drink the wine of her impure passion." Revelation 14:8, R.S.V. What is Babylon, and what is meant by its fall?

In the Book of Revelation, "Babylon the great" stands for all apostate forms of Christianity. Throughout ancient times Jerusalem and Babylon were mortal enemies. They stood as the two great focal points in the agelong conflict between good and evil. Soon after the dawn of history Babylon began to defy God and to oppose His will on earth, and became the chief agent of Satan's master plan to control the human race. It was the traditional foe of God's chosen people, the Hebrews, who suffered more cruelly at the hands of the Babylonians than from any other foreign tyrant except possibly the Romans.

Today, "Babylon the great" stands for all heterodox, apostate religious organizations that have fallen away from the "eternal gospel." It is the Bible's own designation for apostate Christianity in the great final conflict between good and evil. The "wine" of Babylon stands for heretical teachings

palmed off as God's own truth. John saw the people of earth "drunk" with these false doctrines, and Babylon the great "drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus" (Revelation 17:5, 6)—that is, of all who refuse to accept her errors and to submit to her authority.

The first angel's message is thus a call to worship God according to the eternal gospel; and the second, a warning against all substitute gospels.

#### THE THIRD ANGEL'S MESSAGE

Following quickly the first two came the last of the three angels, proclaiming in a loud voice: "If any one worships the beast and its image, and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, he also shall drink the wine of God's wrath, poured unmixed into the cup of his anger, and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment goes up for ever and ever; and they have no rest, day or night, these worshipers of the beast and its image, and whoever receives the mark of its name." Revelation 14:9-11, R.S.V. Whereas the first angel summons men to worship the God of heaven and the second cautions against all substitute forms of worship, the third sounds a special alarm against worshipping the beast and its image, to which the preceding chapter of the Revelation points as the great apostasy of the last days.

This angel pronounces the most solemn and fearful warning to be found in all Scripture. It is a warning that those who yield their faith and submit to human authority in the last great crisis of earth will thereby worship the beast and its image, and that when they choose to reverence the counterfeit Sabbath as it will then be enforced by human laws, in full knowledge that it is not God's appointed day of rest and worship, they will receive the "mark" of the beast. Whereas Revelation 13 warns that an apostate Christianity in league with the civil power will threaten with death those who refuse to worship the beast and its image, the fourteenth chapter warns that all who comply with that demand will automatically incur God's death sentence.

This supreme dilemma will confront every living soul with a personal test and will precipitate the great final crisis between those who choose to be loyal to Christ and those who yield their

allegiance to Satan. Christ counseled His disciples, under such circumstances, not to "fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul," but rather to "fear him who can destroy both body and soul in hell." (Matthew 10:28, R.S.V.) Soon, the whole world will be united against God and against His faithful people, and there will be no place to hide except under the shadow of the Almighty. (See Psalm 91.)

All other warnings of divine judgment recorded in the Scriptures are tempered with infinite mercy and long-suffering. That of the third angel is not. It is final. There will never be another chance. This time, divine retribution will be "poured unmixed into the cup of . . . [God's] anger." Men who choose to drink the wine of Babylon will one day have to drink the wine of God's wrath, which commences with the seven last plagues and ends in the lake of fire. (See Revelation 16; 20:7-15.)

#### GOD'S EVACUATION ORDERS

For emphasis John repeats the threefold message of Revelation 14 in the opening verses of chapter 18, stressing particularly God's call to His people to leave Babylon. The warning of the second angel is sounded again, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great!" and Babylon in her fearful, fallen, apostate condition is figuratively described as "a dwelling place of demons, a haunt of every foul spirit, a haunt of every foul and hateful bird." Then John heard another voice from heaven saying, "Come out of her, my people, lest you take part in her sins, lest you share in her plagues; for her sins are heaped high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities."

The three angels of Revelation 14 thus call men today to reverence, honor, and worship God as the creator of all things, to return to the everlasting gospel proclaimed by the prophets and apostles of old, to withdraw from any and every religious organization that has fallen away from the pure teachings of the gospel, to recognize that the hour of God's judgment has come, and to order their lives in harmony with these sublime facts.

Today Christ is seeking intelligent, honest-hearted men and women to enlist in His last legion of faithful ones, and to take part in giving His last great message of mercy to the world. No higher privilege, no greater opportunity, has been accorded men in any generation. Will you answer the call? **END**



## GOD IS ALIVE, BUT . . .

Ninety-eight percent of Americans recently surveyed by the Gallup Poll said they believe in God, 73 percent believe in life after death, 65 percent believe in hell, 60 percent believe in the devil. A second poll, however, revealed that only 43 percent of adult Americans attend the church of their choice during a typical week.

Though the percentage of church attendance continues a slow decrease from the high of 49 percent recorded in 1958, it still tops the low of 37 percent of 1940, when the Gallup organization first began its study of the churchgoing habits of Americans.

According to the pollsters, 65 percent of Roman Catholics attend church each week, as compared to 38 percent of Protestants. Among the largest Protestant denominations, Lutherans and Baptists topped the list with 38 percent, followed closely by Presbyterians, Methodists, and Episcopalians.

More women (48 percent) attend church weekly than do men (39 percent). Nonwhites (44 percent) barely nudge out whites (43 percent). The college educated (47 percent) top both high school graduates (43 percent) and those who attended only grade school (41 percent).

What age person would you most likely find sitting in church? According to the Gallup pollsters, churchgoers are most apt to be between thirty and forty-nine years old. The highest percentage (46) of churchgoers live in the East, with the lowest percentage (32) in the West. And the higher the income of a person, the more likely is he to be found listening to a sermon. Dwellers of large cities attend church more frequently than their small-town and rural cousins.

Declining attendance among the nation's young adults, those in their twenties, has accounted for most of the drop in church attendance since 1958, claim the pollsters. Though national church attendance by all age groups declined during the past ten years by nearly 6 percent, the slip in attendance among young adults has been 14 percent.

The decline in churchgoing also has been more pronounced among Roman Catholics (down 9 percent) than among Protestants (down 5 percent).

Only in two of the other ten western nations surveyed did people attend with nearly the same regularity as in the United States. Those countries were the Netherlands (42 percent) and Austria (38 percent). In other countries, weekly attendance ran as low as

14 percent in Norway, 9 percent in Sweden, and 5 percent in Finland.

Except for belief in the devil, where Greeks scored 67 percent, Americans scored consistently higher in basic Biblical beliefs than residents of the other countries.

In Great Britain, for instance, 77 percent of those interviewed said they believe in God, 38 percent in life after death, 23 percent in hell, and 21 percent in the devil. In Sweden 60 percent said they believe in God and 17 percent believe in hell. In France 35 percent believe in some kind of life after death and 17 percent in the devil.

What do the statistics indicate?

Andrew Greeley, a prominent Roman Catholic sociologist, points out that in most countries where religious interest is still high, such as in Ireland, Switzerland, the Netherlands, and Canada, several faiths compete for the allegiance of the individual.

Edward B. Fiske of *The New York Times* commented, "Ironically, the ecumenical movement . . . may tend to dampen religious commitment by reducing the number of churches competing for the loyalty of the individual."

And though a vast majority of Americans still claim to believe in traditional Bible doctrines, why do only 43 percent attend church regularly? Could it

## God Is His Point Man

*His confidence expressed in the "God is my point man" legend on his helmet, Sfc. James Fenling of Brooklyn, New York, catches a few winks during a lull in military maneuvers near Bong Son, South Vietnam. A point man serves both as a guide and protector of his fellow soldiers. Other soldiers calculate their positions by his, and as an advance man he helps protect them with warnings of enemy action.*





be that their ministers are no longer preaching Bible-based Christianity? Or is a 9:30 or 10:00 A.M. service just too early for modern Americans?

## ARE CHURCHES REJECTING 2,000 YEARS OF BEAUTY?

The vocal director of Springfield (Illinois) Junior College has condemned certain experiments in church music as "liturgical and artistic degeneration" that is throwing "out the window more than 2,000 years of beauty."

Speaking before a group called Te Deum, Carlton Eldridge commented: "Today . . . our [religious] . . . music has been given a status inferior to air conditioning [and] parking lots. . . . At one time the purpose of music was to edify the faithful. Now it entertains them."

"Once music stimulated our higher sensibilities," added Eldridge. "Now it takes on the lower tendencies in primal, barbaric slapping of the body, the unmerciful beating of inanimate objects, and the emitting of cries and grunts that at one time might have been used to call pet dinosaurs or mastodons."

Eldridge complained that many people today won't attend church unless the music they hear sounds like dance music. "Is the church to drop her role as Mother and Teacher and become Mother and Entertainer?" he asked.

Perhaps the Illinois teacher has a point. Perhaps some trends in church music—such as the "barbaric slapping of the body, the unmerciful beating of inanimate objects," and the cries and grunts with no meaning for humans—are entertainment and not worship.

But at the same time today's musicians must experiment with their worship of God, to ensure that church music communicates God's love for His children sitting in the pews. If "mastodon cries" should be rejected as unfit for worshipping God, shouldn't traditional religious music that means nothing to modern listeners be rejected too?

Just as in the time of Moses, men should use music to praise God, to thank Him for His blessings. Just as the angels sang 2,000 years ago, today's choirs need to sing the story of salvation.

For some worshipers, these selections should be accompanied by the harp. For others, the cymbal will stir souls. But for all, the story of God's

love must be central to the heart-to-heart communication.

## OH, THOSE RUSSIAN GRANDMOTHERS!

The Russian newspaper *Izvestia* has urged Russians to return to the morals of their grandmothers' days.

"Don't you think, dear reader," wrote U. Feofanov, "that ideas change too rapidly about such eternal matters as a girl's honor and a woman's dignity?"

"Our forebears had fun, too," continued Feofanov, "and even kissed each other. But still I think that if our grandmothers had returned home after midnight at the age of fifteen, there would have been a big row. And if father or mother had noticed on grandmother's breath the smell of alcohol, that would have been an extraordinary event. But if she had not come home at all to sleep, I can't even imagine what might have happened."

*Izvestia* did not advocate returning to ripping off pigtailed and using horse-whips, but it did raise the question of whether Russian society has gone too far in rejecting "the narrow-mindedness introduced by religion and private school teaching" concerning relationships between the sexes.

Writer Feofanov told the story of fifteen-year-old Luda and a fortyish painter by the name of Yevgeny Vaasilevich.

"Sorry, do I disturb you?" asked

Luda as she entered Yevgeny's studio, according to court records.

"Ah, it's you, charming baby."

"What are you doing, Yevgeny?"

"At this moment I am drinking vodka, as you see. Perhaps you want to try some of the divine nectar?"

The dialogue led to a life of drinking bouts, midnight car rides, and pregnancy for Luda and trial for corrupting the morals of a minor for Yevgeny.

*Izvestia* blamed not only men but also mothers and teachers who fail to teach and inform the children or students. Mothers do not safeguard their daughters as they used to, wrote Feofanov. They allow them to "proceed directly from childhood to the dirt of corruption."

"It seems to me," said Feofanov, "that if all of us . . . would more openly repeat the perhaps trivial truths that stem not from present fashion but from more stable moral concepts, there would be fewer cases like that of Luda."

And if slipping morals should be stopped in Russia, shouldn't they be stopped in every other country of the world? Oh, for a good old-fashioned Russian—or American—grandmother!

## HOSPITAL BANS SALE OF CIGARETTES

The medical staff of St. Vincent Hospital in Worcester, Massachusetts, has reacted to what it calls a "threat to general health" by banning the sale of cigarettes at the institution. Six cigarette vending machines have been removed from hospital property.

A staff spokesman at St. Vincent, New England's second largest general hospital, said if removal of the machines does not dissuade people from smoking, at least it will "underscore the dangers inherent in the continued use of cigarettes."

The executive director of the hospital, Sister Helen Marie Smith, S.P., commented: "As a major community hospital, it is incumbent upon us to set an example and to actively discourage smoking in the furtherance of good health practices."

The Roman Catholic hospital joins hundreds of similar institutions—including more than 275 Seventh-day Adventist hospitals and clinics—that prohibit the sale of tobacco products on their premises.

END

## PRAYER CIRCLE

"Pray for one another," wrote the Apostle James, "that you may be healed." (James 5:16, R.S.V.) The privilege of prayer is one of God's best gifts, not that He isn't already willing to give us much more than we deserve, but He is waiting and longing for us to just ask Him.

We need your prayers, and you need ours. Pray for us, and we will pray for you. Send your prayer requests to THESE TIMES Prayer Circle, Box 59, Nashville, Tennessee 37202.



# “We Quote

**James Reston**, “New York Times” columnist: “Robert F. Kennedy is only the latest victim of a modern world that has turned loose greater forces than it can control. . . . The assassins of President Kennedy, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Lee Harvey Oswald and the attacker of Senator Kennedy may merely be deranged demons, tormented by frustrations and intoxicated by fear or revenge. But there is more to it than that. . . . There is something in the air of the modern world: a defiance of authority, a contagious irresponsibility, a kind of moral delinquency, no longer restrained by religious or ethical faith. And these attitudes are now threatening not only personal serenity but also public order in many parts of the world.”

**Leon M. Herman**, authority on the Soviet Union: “The Russian hippy is called stilyaga, which means, literally, ‘fashion or fad addict.’ The stilyaga dresses in the latest Western clothes, tight pants, chain around the neck, and listens to the latest rock ‘n’ roll music. Since they can’t riot, the Russian kids show their rebellion by openly embracing all that their parents and the bureaucrats think is most decadent in the West.”

**Walter R. Beach**, secretary of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists: “The highly developed West too often substitutes the irrelevant for the essential, affluence for influence. For instance, ardent dog-lovers may have had cause for rejoicing by the publication some time ago of the book entitled, ‘The Secret of Cooking for Dogs.’ I wish to submit, however, that there is something absurdly irrelevant in the publication of a dog cookbook at a time when urgent human claims are made upon all men.”

**O. A. Battista** in his book “The Power to Influence People”: “It has been my experience that other people take a far greater interest in your facial expression than in what you are wearing or what you are saying. Your facial expression is a greater force than your hidden bank account or that price tag on your clothes, your car, your home. Time and time again some of the most elegantly and fashionably dressed people I have known failed to leave favorable impressions. They fell absolutely flat on their sullen faces. They did not realize that a positive, appealing facial expression can be used to make capital gains with other people.”

## THESE TIMES

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# Opinion

## GOD'S PREDICAMENT—AND OURS

**D**OES a plastic heart have love in it?" That was the question sent by seven-year-old Linda Griggs of Pittsburgh to a famed heart surgeon, Dr. Michael DeBakey, of Houston, Texas. In his reply to Linda Doctor DeBakey wrote:

"Yes, a plastic heart does have love in it, a very great deal of love.

"The love in a plastic heart is the love of many people who love other people, and don't want them to die.

"So these people work all day and often all night to build a heart that will make people live longer.

"If you can think of how much love there would be in hundreds of hearts, then that is how much love there is in a plastic heart."

In an age of satellites, computers, and awesome nuclear stockpiles, the plastic heart is a symbol of technology when powered by love.

But it has become painfully clear that millions of people have yet to comprehend that God's beautiful new world, which is eminently worth striving for, was fashioned in His heart of love.

Frankly, we have tried to make this issue of *THESE TIMES* a little special. It is our attempt to portray some of the beauties of God's new world, a sort of supplement or summary of what the Bible says about His coming kingdom. Admittedly, the whole idea was presumptuous. How could anything be added to the gracious invitations and glowing word pictures of Holy Writ? On top of that came the appalling thought that God Himself has not been any too successful in attracting men to Himself down through the centuries.

For example, after 1,600 years of human history, mankind had so completely forsaken God that the great Creator found only eight people worthy of being saved from the Flood: Noah, his wife, his three sons and their wives. Eight people—and there must have been millions!

Then, the Israelites, God-chosen to represent Him in the earth, never developed into an evangelistic entity. Their record of loyalty to Him is spotty at best. Finally they were rejected as a people after the resurrection of Christ. The Christian church has taken over since then, with so-so results despite a few admirable individual and collective efforts.

Today we have those who claim to be of the church but who say, "There once was a God—now there is no God. He once lived, but somewhere in history, he died." And the latest theological wrinkle is called "process theology," which pictures an incomplete God who, like His fellow human beings, "is man's companion on the creative advance toward perfection." All the while God has plainly said in His Word, "I the Lord do not change." Malachi 3:6, R.S.V.

Let's come back to this special issue. Apparently

we Christians need to do a better selling job. We've got the best product in the world, but our salesmanship is lacking. Which brings up the following story: The young sergeant was passing out apricots in small paper dishes to the chow line. He decided to experiment. He asked the next few men as they came by, "You don't want any apricots, do you?" and 90 percent of them said, "No."

"You *do* want apricots, don't you?" Approximately 50 percent answered, "Yes, I'll take some."

The sergeant then started asking, "One dish of apricots or two?" And, despite the fact that soldiers don't like army apricots, 40 percent took two dishes and 50 percent took one.

Perhaps we editors should ask, Which heaven do you prefer, Heaven No. 1 or Heaven No. 2?

The ultimate question is, What kind of God do we have? The Bible tells us; the life of Christ shows us: He is Love.

The great secret of the universe is that a lover needs a beloved. God the Lover fashioned beings capable of returning love. In creating these beings, He gave them the power of choice—to love Him or reject Him. Unfortunately, a third of the angels and a great majority of mankind have chosen not to follow Him. One of these days, soon, God will close the door on human history. He'll have a clean universe composed only of those who love Him. While the door is still open, the words of John 14:1-3 bear repeating:

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

Again, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard; neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." 1 Corinthians 2:9.

When you think of it, God is offering His beautiful new world, with all its excitement, its joy, its possibilities for achievement, not for a day or even for a thousand years, but forever.

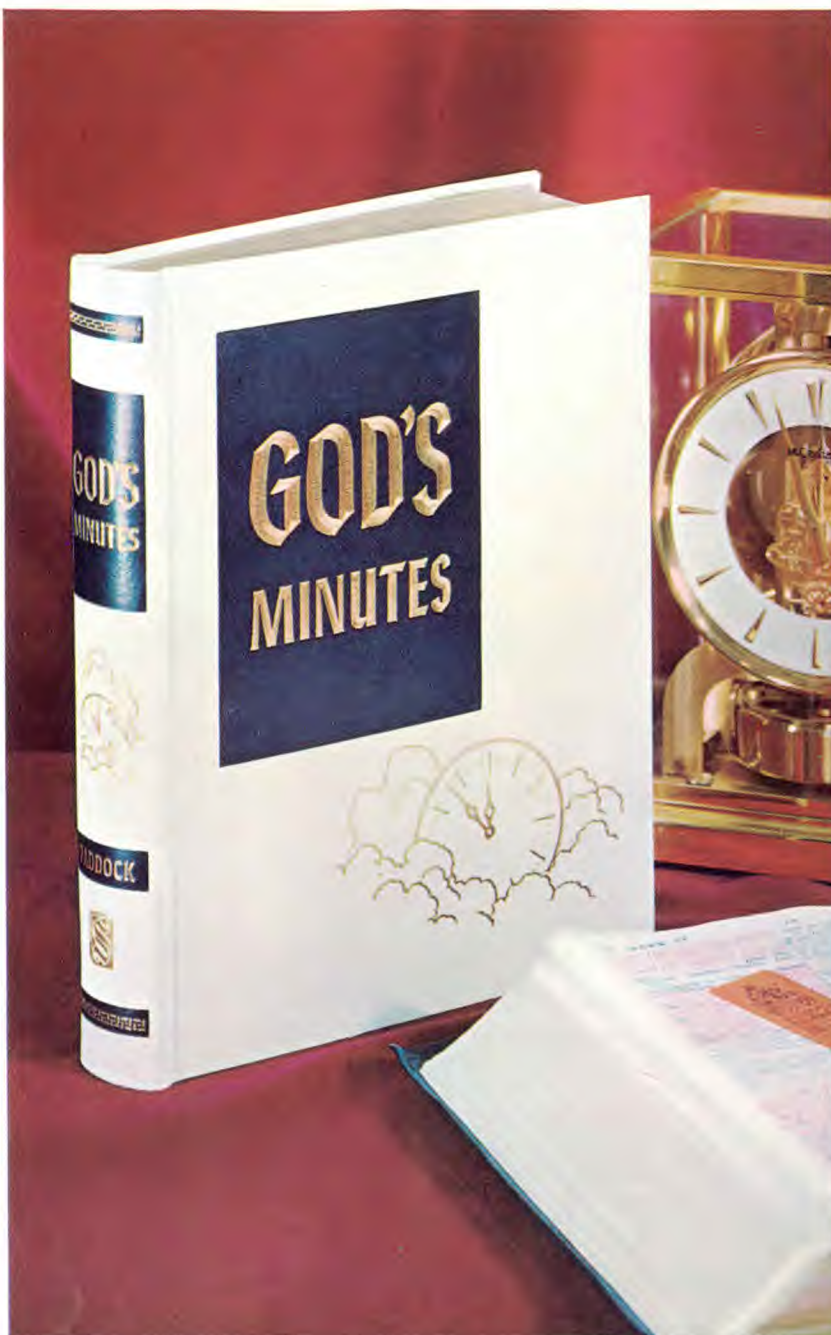
Hendrik Willen Van Loon writes: "High up in the North, in the land called Svithjod, there stands a rock. It is 100 miles high and 100 miles wide. Once every 1,000 years a little bird comes to this rock to sharpen its beak. When the rock has thus been worn away, then a single day of eternity will have gone by."

John 3:16, the Bible's most familiar text, reads, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

God's heart, though not made of plastic, has a limitless lot of love in it. There is room for us all, for time and eternity.

K. J. H.





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